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DYSTOPIAN FUTURISTIC VISIONS IN IMRE MADÁCH'S THE TRAGEDY OF MAN

Degree for which thesis was presented
Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée
M.A.

Year this degree conferred
Année d'obtention de ce grade
Fall 85

University – Université
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DYSTOPIAN FUTURISTIC VISIONS

IN

IMRE MADÁCH'S

THE TRAGEDY OF MAN

by

MARY ADRIENNE KAISER BOZSIK

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1985

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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submitted by MARY ADRIENNE KAISER BOZSIK

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of ARTS

.....
Supervisor

Edward Mozejko
.....
Supervisor

.....

Date October 11, 1985

To

Mária and Imre

because you are my parents

as well as my friends,

but more, . . .

because without you

this would be and mean

nothing.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this M.A. thesis is to examine the dystopian nature of the visions of the future found in Imre Madách's The Tragedy of Man and place them within a larger, more international perspective. The work is examined from a variety of angles. The influence of literary trends and developments both national and international is seen, as well as Madách's deviations from and innovations upon them. The historical context that the work was written in and influenced by is shown along with the personal life and development of this writer who really produced only one masterpiece.

The dystopian scenes in the poetic drama, The Tragedy of Man, reveal Madách's concerns about the future of industrialization and commerce, the abuse of reason and science, and man's fate which is intimately and unbreakably connected to the ultimate fate of the earth.

The relationship of the work to the works of European Romanticists, namely Byron, Goethe and Hugo is seen with respect to thematic content, style and form. The influence of philosophers such as Fourier, Hegel, Herder, Kant, Plato, Rousseau and Voltaire is examined particularly with respect to the dystopian scenes. As well the affinities of these scenes with later works of science fiction by Huxley, Orwell, Verne, Wells and Orwell are shown. Madách's scenes serve as antecedents to the thematic concerns of these works, they are as well precursors to the Hungarian science fiction writers, Jókai and Mikszáth, who developed respectively the 'hard' and 'soft' streams of science fiction in the late-nineteenth century.

Because of the broad background and scope, imaginative genius, and insights into the essence of human existence displayed in the dystopian visions, their presentation of radically innovative concepts and their integration of numerous philosophical, literary, historical, social and political ideas show them to be not only magnificent, but also amazingly before their time. Very few literary works can claim to be linked to so many concepts at one and the same time, and categorized in so many ways, poème d'humanité, historical drama, science fiction, romanticism, realism, prophecy, warning. The Tragedy of Man cannot be simply and easily 'pigeon-holed' or classified as just one thing. It is manyfold and has aspects which superficially may seen to be different or contradict one another, but which Madách managed to weave together into cohesive harmony and unity with such genius that one cannot help but be awestruck by the work. The play reveals man's existence both physical and spiritual in all of its complexities and contradictory nature. The dystopian scenes take this contradictory nature of man into a possible future, one that is filled with a certain amount of pessimism based on past human history, but one that also has its own measure of hope and optimism found in man's inherent character and profound faith. This is a future that is, like man, contradictory.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of my supervisors Professors Milan V. Dimić and Edward R. Možejko for their useful bibliographical and technical suggestions, encouragement, advice and support. I owe thanks to Professor O. Zujewskyj for graciously agreeing to serve on my committee.

At the Institute for Literary Studies, Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest, Professor Tibor Klaniczay faciliated the use and examination of library resources. Professor György Mihály Vajda, editor of Neohelicon (Budapest), offered helpful suggestions. Without the advice, suggestions and valuable consultation of Professor Károly Horváth this task would have been a much more formidable and difficult one.

The constant encouragement and support of my friends, despite emotionally turbulent times, never waivered. Evelyn Sopkow rendered invaluable aid in the preparation of the manuscript, for which I am truly grateful. I would, perhaps most of all, like to thank my parents, for without their continuous faith in my abilities and their constant unquestioning love, this would have never come into existence.

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AN INTRODUCTION

The possibility of an ideal society has been an important and prevalent theme in written human literature almost from its inception. Thinkers have examined the ways of bringing it about, its inherent positive values and the conditions that would exist in such a place, in imaginative, logical and meticulous ways. From classic and universally-familiar works such as Plato's Republic and Thomas More's Utopia, to lesser-known, but nonetheless thought-provoking works such as the Victorian Looking Backward by Edward Bellamy with its primarily socio-economic utopia and the feminist utopia of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Herland, the extremely broad scope of the utopia genre is evident. Inextricably bound with this literary interest in the perfect society is an interest in its inherent opposite, its darker underside, or its negative, the anti-utopia or dystopia which has also been examined, but only relatively recently on a wider scale. This genre has, to a large extent, flourished in conjunction with the use of science fiction in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It had its real beginnings in the late Victorian period with works like Jules Verne's Les 500 millions de la Bégoume (The Begum's Fortune) and peaked in twentieth century masterpieces like Yevgeny Zamyatin's We, Aldous Huxley's Brave New World and George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four. It remains one of the dominant themes in contemporary science fiction.

The motivation behind such works in almost exclusively to force the

reader to look at what situations existing in their own time may develop into at some future time, if conditions are left as they are. The focus is on the present as opposed to the future which serves as the setting of many of these works. Donald Lawlor in his Approaches to Science Fiction encapsulates it this way:

> The usual moral of the dystopia is to imply that if certain trends of the present continue, the result may be a dysfunctioning social order or worse. In other words, in one way or another it is always the present that the author of a dystopia is asking us to examine.[1]

The major purpose of a dystopian work is to act as a warning of the possibilities of the future which are already inherent in the conditions of the present. The ultimate aim therefore, is to force the reader to some form of action which would prevent the actualization of these negative worlds. This is illustrated most convincingly in Bernard Crick's biography, George Orwell: A Life which meticulously details Orwell's reactions to and defense of his novel Nineteen Eighty-Four and the uproar following its publication in 1949.

> It has been suggested by some of the reviewers of Nineteen Eighty-Four that it is the author's view that this, or something like this, is what will happen inside the next forty years in the Western world. This is not correct. I think that, allowing for the book being after all a parody, something like Nineteen Eighty-Four could happen. This is the direction in which the world is going at the present time, and the trend lies deep in the political, social and economic foundations of the contemporary world situation. ...
>
> The moral to be drawn from this dangerous nightmare situation is a simple one: Don't let it happen. It depends on you.[2]
>
> ...
>
> My recent novel is NOT intended as an attack on Socialism or on the British Labour Party (of which I am a supporter) but as a show-up of the perversions to which a centralized economy is liable and which have already been partly realized in Communism and Fascism. I do not believe that the kind of society I describe necessarily will arrive, but I believe (allowing of course for the fact that the book is a satire) that something resembling it could

> arrive. I believe also that the totalitarian ideas have taken root in the mind of intellectuals everywhere, and I have tried to draw these ideas out to their logical consequences. The scene of the book is laid in Britain in order to emphasise that the English-speaking races are not innately better than anyone else and that totalitarianism, if not fought against, could triumph anywhere.[3]

Not all authors have the opportunity to defend and explain their dystopian works and Orwell's eloquent, representative comments can be used to obtain insights into the dystopian works of the authors.

One work to which Orwell's comments apply is The Tragedy of Man (1861) by Imre Madách. This fifteen act drama has Lucifer showing Adam numerous historical periods in which Adam assumes the persona of actual historical figures. There are four scenes (XI to XIV) in the play which depict Madách's speculations about the future as perceived from Madách's own mid-nineteenth-century life. Each of these four scenes contains strong and unsettling dystopian elements, manifested in different ways. It is an examination of the dystopian nature of these visions of the future which will serve as the main aim of this thesis. In what ways are these visions unique? What makes them dystopian? What is their relevance and wherein lies their value? How are they structured? What do they reveal about the nineteenth century, in general, and about Madách's life, in particular? By providing answers to these questions this thesis will come to a fuller or better understanding of the importance of Imre Madách's The Tragedy of Man.

Notes

[1]Donald L. Lawlor, Approaches to Science Fiction (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1978), p. 423.

[2]Bernard Crick, George Orwell: A Life (London: Secker and Warburg, 1980), p. 395. This is from a Press Release dictated by Orwell to his publisher Fredric Warburg, dated June 15, 1949, which expressed Orwell's unhappiness at misunderstandings or deliberate distortions of his work, Nineteen Eight-Four.

[3]Ibid., p. 398. The excerpt quoted is from Orwell's response to a cable from an official of the United Automobile Workers, a Francis A. Henson, who wished to recommend the book to his members but wanted some clarification because of the good press it was getting in several right-wing journals, dated June 16, 1949.

Chapter 1

LITERARY BACKGROUND

It is always with some degree of trepidation and no less difficulty that one approaches a work of literature which is regarded as a national literary masterpiece and held in a reverence usually reserved for a cherished national treasure. This difficulty and hesitation are augmented when the literary work is from a culture and in a language that is fairly unknown, isolated or removed from the usual scope of Western literary readership. This is the case with the profoundly moving drama, The Tragedy of Man[1] (Az ember tragédiája[2]) by the Hungarian author, Imre Madách. Since its publication in 1861 this dramatic work which consists of fifteen scenes written in regular iambic pentameters with rhyme and changes in line length where the subject matter requires, has become the most renowned single piece of Hungarian drama both inside and outside Hungary's borders.[3] In addition to the difficulties inherent in the language, a uniquely identifiable Hungarian national character and perspective has been a severely restrictive feature in much Hungarian literature and inevitably resulted in limiting readership within rigidly-drawn borders. The emphasis on a larger, universal viewpoint has taken The Tragedy of Man beyond this mere national acceptance and appreciation, and assured it of a rightful and well-deserved place in European literature.[4]

Within the frame of an action taking place in heaven, paradise and

a rich and diverse landscape outside paradise (scenes I to III, and XV), eleven scenes show various historical characters and events in a chronological order. The sequence of scenes depicting historical eras from the very distant past to the very distant future, in particular, provide a unique opportunity to examine certain blocks of time in relative isolation. This is especially viable in the study of scenes portraying future time with respect to Madách's own mid-nineteenth-century milieu. With Adam's invocation of Lucifer to take him further into the future at the end of scene X, there begins a separate set of visions. Dramatically severed from the previous scenes, these speculations of time future as opposed to time past are set distinctively apart, a separate entity which is capable of examination and scrutiny in isolation.

> Lead, enigmatic Spirit Guardian,
> Me to that new world which shall come to be
> If it shall comprehend the ideals
> Of a great man, and to the hidden thought
> Give free speech spoken in true liberty,
> On the accursed dust of ruins old. (X, p. 121)

With these words, "the new world which shall come to be", Adam's future is dramatically severed from the previous scenes. While all of the scenes are, in effect visions of the future for Adam, they are for Madách, historical hindsights and therefore restrict his scope of speculation. This demarcation, however, separates what Madách knew historically and his complete speculation on the future. Thus he is freed from the restrictions of past history. He can give his imagination a freer 'rein' in creating scenes of mankind's fate in the future to come. He does not have to rely on the past and merely be content with shifting emphasis to suit his purposes.

This speculation upon the future consists of four scenes, XI through XIV. In the eleventh scene nineteenth-century capitalistic London is shown. This is an advancement of the preceeding revolutionary Paris scene both historically and thematically. It is set in Madách's own life in the 1860's and in the time after Madách. Clearly it is based on a furthering of concerns and conditions which existed during, and as a result of the Industrial Revolution. These were only beginning to be perceived in the Hungary of Madách's lifetime, as Hungary remained a country whose economy was based primarily on agriculture and was industrialized at a later date than most other European countries. Scene XII depicts a Fourier-type Phalanstery further in the future based almost solely upon the scientific principles which were gaining a place of pre-eminence in the nineteenth century. This is followed by a scene even more in the future in which Adam and Lucifer are flying through space and which emphasizes the bonds between man and the earth, an aspect that has become the basis of and is found manifested in contemporary international space programmes. The final scene with the description of the future presents a frozen, desolated world of ice where only a few Eskimos survive by the only known mode of existence, the 'survival of the fittest.' The sun has lost its warmth and all growth is stunted. This is again an uncanny speculation given twentieth-century estimations of the potential lifespan of the sun and predictions of another Ice Age that would follow any form of possible major nuclear war, a terrifying possibility, but a real one given the present world situation.

While similar and older speculations upon the future exist, three

main aspects of this work make it especially worthy of consideration. The first has to do with Madách's unique combination of style and content. The dramatic poetic/poème d'humanité form is not considered perhaps the most 'natural' medium to present futuristic visions. This, combined with the relative obscurity and inaccessibility of Hungarian language and literature, has resulted in The Tragedy of Man as rarely being considered an antecedent to dystopian forms of modern science fiction which it definitely is. This both demands and offers a special opportunity to examine a work not normally considered to have strong science fiction elements. Secondly, the unique influences of nineteenth-century science, economics, philosophy and politics upon Madach that have been well documented (See Notes), have shaped an individual perspective from which these futuristic visions are presented, one that cannot be duplicated by another writer. Finally, there is an uncanny degree of accuracy in these scenes as possible predictions of the future in the light of world developments since Madách's own lifetime, which gives an added importance and value to the warnings.

These scenes describe diverse, distinct situations, giving evidence of the imaginative scope and breadth of Madách's mind, but there is a strong, definite thread common to the group of scenes as a whole. All of these scenes contain conditions or ideas which existed in Madách's own time and are the logical ends of these ideas carried to their ultimate conclusions. Perhaps more importantly, each of the four scenes has a distinct dystopian nature. In every one there is a marked negative dystopian overtone, one that is manifested in various ways, but

one that nevertheless seeks to warn of the possible consequences of developments that had their beginnings in nineteenth-century Europe. It is the examination of this dystopian character of the futuristic visions in The Tragedy of Man that shall be the concern for this work. Clearly these visions have affinities with and are antecedents to major twentieth-century literary works, Yevgeny Zamyatin's We (1924-5), H. G. Wells' The Time Machine (1928), Aldous Huxley's Brave New World (1932) and George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four (1949), to name merely a few. Madách's visions, however, are of a more general, universal and philosophical nature, almost apocalyptic in the profoundness of their revelations, than the visions of these twentieth-century writers which are more scientifically specific in character.

An examination of the Hungarian literary environment that led up to the writing of The Tragedy of Man serves to place the work into a wider framework and show some of its national foundations. From 1800 onwards there were numerous Hungarian writers producing work in large part because of the rising national consciousness and the massive reform of the Hungarian language which came as a direct reaction to the Austrian Emperor Joseph II's royal decree of May 6, 1784 that attempted to introduce the use of the German language for all public and official transactions. Nevertheless, four major writers dominated the Hungarian literary scene.[5] They were: Ferenc Kölcsey (1790-1838), János Arany (1817-1882), Mihály Vörösmarty (1800-1855) and Sándor Petőfi (1822-1849). These were the main proponents of the Hungarian Romantic movement which was a variation of the European Romanticism.

The Hungarian Romantic movement had some unique characteristics and

found its roots primarily in European Romanticism. While a more detailed examination of this movement here would be impossible, an introduction to a few of the main ideas is necessary. One of the dominant concepts was that of nemzethalál (the death or eradication of the nation) which had always been a concern of the Hungarian people. Nemzethalál had entered the Hungarian intellectual milieu formally with Herder's book on the philosophy of history, Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit (1784-91) in which he claimed that both the Hungarian language and people would, given time, be assimilated into the Germanic and Slavic cultures and thereby eradicated. The fear of nemzethalál was augmented by the decree of 1784 and provided added impetus to the movement to reform the language. It also provided a wealth of subject matter for writers. Rebellion against the seemingly inevitable nemzethalál, the search for a national identity, the raising of consciousness on cultural, political philosophical and social levels, a preoccupation with things Hungarian, and the role played by a higher order, a form of fate or God, all served, in various combinations as the bulk of subject matter and concern for the writers of the period.

These concerns were easily adaptable to the concept of European Romanticism which Lotze claims includes:

> ... mankind's development toward a more perfect state. ... the past, present, and future history of humanity. ... the healing power of nature. ... the inability of the human race to find freedom through revolution. Man can reach perfection within himself and by himself. Only if the individual overcomes hate and embraces love can he be free.[6]

Madách, in particular drew upon the French example. While it is true that he drew upon the German Romantic movement, primarily in his admiration of Goethe's Faust, his affinities with Hugo's La Légende des

Siècles are much closer, as evidenced in his use of the poème d'humanité form. In the Hungarian Romantic movement Madách found antecedents in concern and emphasis.

Ferenc Kölcsey, who was involved in the general overall reform of the language and is perhaps most noted for being the author of the national anthem 'Himnusz' ('Hymn', 1823) maintained a certain stoicism in his writing which is found in his poem 'Vanitatum vanitas'. Frederick Riedl's translation of a part of the work quoted below, shows definite affinities with The Tragedy of Man in its depiction of the deaths of Socrates, Cato and Zrinyi which seem to be echoes in Madách's historical visions as presented by Lucifer, as well as the final conclusion that nothing has any true or real significance.

> There is the scripture; read its pages, and you will find the truth taught by Solomon that all is vanity. Our earth is but an ant-hill and an evanescent phenomenon. The events of history pass like a sigh. The heroism of the legions was as a bubble. The greatest of battles is no more than a cock-fight. Self-sacrificing virtue is but a dream. The dream of Socrates, or Cato or Zrinyi was a kind of insanity. What are knowledge and philosophy but systematic ignorance and chimera? Faith and hope are mere illusions; our life is but flame of a candle, and death is the breath by which it is extinguished. Immortality is like the scent of a flower; when the flower dies its perfume outlasts it for a short time only. We ought not, therefore, to attribute any importance to fate, life, virtue or knowledge. Be firm as a rock, and whatever aspect fortune may wear for you, know that all is vain.[7]

In the Tragedy the conclusion at which Adam arrives is not as definite as that of the narrator of 'Vanitatum vanitas', but the feelings of frustration and sense of futility are the same. In scene XV Adam asks the Lord:

> Is this brief span of life all that I have,
> In which my soul doth fight and, therein strained,
> Like wine, that, when at length 'tis purified,
> It be poured on the earth to slake the dust?
> Or hast Thou for the wine a nobler use?
> And shall man yet press on to greater heights

That, nobler grown, Thy throne he may draw near?
Or weary, die like beasts that turn a mill,
And never break the circle that they tread?
Is there a recompense for lofty souls,
Whom, for the blood they shed, the crowd doth mock?
(p. 192-193)

There is here not the total and absolute futulity of human action found in Kölcsey's work which incorporates all of the negative aspects of nemzethalál. While there is no hope for Kölcsey, for Madách some hope exists as Adam, despite telling the possible, inglorious end of mankind also intimates in his questioning, although uncertainly, that there might be a "nobler use" or "greater heights" for mankind and that he may even draw nearer to the Lord and there may be "recompense for lofty souls." There is, however, here an assumed higher order to things, known by the Lord to whom Adam turns in seeking answers. The connection between Kölcsey's 'Vanitatum vanitas' and Madách's Tragedy has been observed by Loránt Czigány and Dieter Lotze.[8]

János Arany who has been called Hungary's greatest narrative poet and was acclaimed Poet Laureate of Hungary, did much to aid the flowering of the literary movement in Hungary during this period. He helped introduce Shakespeare into the country, used his own poetry which was primarily in the epic form, to further the revolutionary cause, and with Sándor Petőfi legitimized the népies (of or belonging to the people) movement. This was based on the need to concretize the national identity through a use of adaptations, imitations or variations on the language, oral traditions and oral literary forms that were to be found in the Hungarian fold and required staunch support of the revolutionary cause which culminated in the War of Independence (1848-49).

In his poem 'Gondolatok a békekongresszus felöl' ('Thoughts about

the Peace Congress', 1850), Arany examines the possibility of true peace. The oppression of the weak brings about the spirit of rebellion in a never-ending circle. He compares world history and nations to bubbles which are created, rise and dissipate, foreshadowing much of the Tragedy's concept of the rise and fall of a cyclical nature to world history. The economic discrepancies that exist between classes is both in Arany's poem and is clearly evident in the various historical periods presented by Madách. The conclusion of 'Gondolatok a békekongresszus felől' also calls to mind Adam's final dilemma at the end of the Tragedy.

> The wise God is the one who gives the orders;
> Man's task is to stay human
> Both in peace and war.[9]

This notion of man's duty to merely strive on, maintain his faith and trust found here and in the Tragedy is also explicitly found in Mihály Vörösmarty's 'Gondolatok a könyvtárban' ('Thoughts in the Library'):

> What is our task in life? To strive with all our strength for the noblest aims. The fate of a nation lies in our hands. When we have lifted this country out of its errors and misfortunes, we shall be able to say, as our eyes close in death, We thank Thee, life, for all the grand opportunities of work which thou hast given us, and which have enabled us to play our part here meaningfully.[10]

There is here also a strong feeling of the nationalistic turmoil that existed in the political world of Hungary of the first half of the nineteenth century, in addition to the examination of a meaningful purpose for man in life as well as the deference to the higher power of life.

Sándor Petőfi, the greatest and most passionately national, lyrical poet, who died on the battlefield in 1849, in his last great

epic poem 'Az apostol' ('The Apostle') described a life of misery, included Silveszter, the protagonist, who is from the lower classes, can never realize his many idealistic thoughts that because of the structure of society, can never be realized. This reflects to some extent Petőfi's admiration for Charles Dickens' works which had been translated into Hungarian. In 'Az apostol' Petőfi shows the despair existing in the world and compares the world to a grape.

> A grape ... is a small thing, yet it requires a whole summer to ripen it. The world requires much more. How many thousands of sunrays have touched on a simple berry. How many millions may the world need? But the rays which help to develop and ripen the world are the souls of men. Every great soul is such a ray, ... I feel I am one of those who are helping to ripen the earth.[11]

Petőfi, and Madách, see the despair existing in the world, but there is a sense of hope that the individual life has some meaning. Despair is not complete or absolute. The Lord in Tragedy also states that there is a meaning to human life:

> Thine arm is strong, and lofty is thy heart:
> A boundless field doth for thy labour call,
> And if thou listenest, a voice shall sound
> That shall not fail to warn thee and uplift.
> ...
> Thy fond denial and thy knowledge cold
> Shall be the leaven in the mind of man,
> And though he stray a brief space from the road,
> It matters not, he shall return to it.
> But this shall be eternal punishment
> For thee, that thou shalt see unceasingly
> What thou dost seek to ruin and destroy,
> Life, the new seed of beauty, nobleness.
> (p. 194-195)

Thus Madách draws upon the atmosphere and tone of Hungarian Romanticism, but there is more to it than that. He is not satisfied with the nationalistic limitations, as is Vörösmarty. The scope of his work is more universal, embracing world history and the fate of all mankind and not just Hungary and the Hungarian people. He goes beyond

nemzethalál to an all-encompassing világhalál (the death or eradication of the world) and examines the possibility of it coming to pass. The rebellion to free mankind from the constraints it is under are of global proportions as opposed to merely national ones.

Madách shares some of Kölcsey's view of the futility and frustrations of human life but Madách does not share Kölcsey's view that everything is futile for at the end of the tragedy it is only Lucifer's version of world history that has been presented and surely nothing less devastating can be expected from him as his aim is to break Adam's spirit. The negative scenes presented are also only parts of dream sequences which are not the true reality. Also the Lord gives words of encouragement and instills hope through the notion of the hope of salvation and eternal life following man's earthly life. There is a sense of hope in the Tragedy that is not found in 'Vanitatum vanitas.'

Madách also goes beyond Arany's 'Gondolatok a békekongresszus felől.' There is the notion certainly of man's fate being to strive under the higher order of God, but the choir of angels at the end of the play (p.195) introduce the notion of the free will of man to choose. God does not "give the orders" but in The Tragedy of Man he gives mercy and grace to man and rewards him with salvation and eternal life. Madách has added a dimension to the Romanticism of Arany.

There is also much development from Petőfi's position to Madách's Tragedy. While both have a sense of hope for the future and assume an inherent value of human life, Madách in his visions of the future cannot escape from the emergence of the movement of Realism in Europe. The stark portrayal of the despair of a mother losing her child, the cold

calculated callousness of the atmosphere of the Phalanstery, the cruel, inhuman commercialism of nineteenth century London and the horror in facing a degenerate, animalistic humanity in the Eskimo scene all show that Madách had been made aware of the necessity of examining his own surroundings in the manner of the French Realists such as Balzac, Stendhal and Flaubert. Once exposed to the notion of realism, he could not completely ignore it and remain firmly within the boundaries of Romanticism. Perhaps this realization motivates the comment from Lucifer that:

> I am the son, or father, as thou wilt,
> (For in the spirit world it matters not)
> Of the new movement called Romanticism.
> And just in this distortion I delight
> The grinning ape that counterfeits man's face;
> Magnificence; then pelting it with mud;
> Concupiscence; a penitent's hair shirt;
> A hymn to chastity from harlot's lips;
> The worship of the worthless and the small;
> The curse the worn out rake doth hurl at love;
> All this makes me forget my kingdom dies;
> For in new forms reborn, I live anew.
> (p. 126)

Madách's roots are firmly placed in Hungarian Romanticism, as seen in his affinities with Arany, Kölcsey, Petőfi and Vörösmarty, but he has gone beyond its boundaries. It might be said that Madách in his 'spiritual' environment was at the end of the Romantic movement in Hungary, but had not totally entered the Hungarian Realistic surge of literary development which was to come into dominance in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Tragedy of Man is between two movements, including important and fundamental aspects of the romantic world, while only hinting at the possibilities and precepts of the realistic one.

There has been a tremendous amount of critical work generated by

The Tragedy of Man both in Hungary and in the international literary community since its appearance over one hundred years ago. One of the largest bodies of criticism deal with the question of whether this is really a tragedy or not and to what degree it is a pessimistic work. Of these studies the article by Thomas R. Mark is the most helpful.[12] From Győző Morvay's initial truly detailed examination in 1897[13] to the classic Voinovich study of 1922[14] and Balogh's Madách: the Man and the Writer (1934)[15] excellent integrated and comprehensive overviews may be found.

There are numerous studies that attempt to grapple with the problem of placing Madách into the historical and cultural developments of his century,[16] but of these critics three major ones come to the fore. István Sőtér, and to a lesser extent the earlier Voinovich, showed the parallels between incidents in The Tragedy of Man and Hungary's struggle for national political autonomy in 1848 and 1849.[17] The third, but not any lesser critic of this school, Károly Horváth, also shows the strong implications of such a turbulent historical period and personal life, upon the sensitive Madách.[18]

Also connected with this historical perspective on The Tragedy of Man have been the Marxist interpretations of which József Waldapfel's study (1957)[19] and that of György Lukács' (1955)[20] are considered the most comprehensive and complete. While Waldapfel emphasized the literary rather than the philosophical impact of the play, Lukács' iconoclastic study in Magyar irodalom--magyar kultúra (Hungarian Literature--Hungarian Culture) aroused debate by trying to destroy the myth of Madách; in this inquiry what are considered by Lukács to be

inconsistencies in the work, primarily the obvious conflict between a great, heroic individual and the antagonistic, ignorant masses, which inevitably results in a definite class bias, negate any possibility of universality in scope, appeal and application, because Lukács sees this as an alienation from the people and therefore not a comprehensive perspective. Lukács also maintains that Madách's unarguable class bias nullifies the depiction of the seemingly contradictory Tertullianistic, stoic philosophy that Lukács asserts to have supported Hungarians and Hungary throughout the centuries. This argumentation necessitates the use of an historical perspective and thus The Tragedy of Man is seen as more of an historical work than an artistic one that is judged according to an artistic set of criteria and for its inherent artistic value. Lukács' praise for the play is, at best, extremely moderate because there is in The Tragedy of Man an inherent criticism of a socialism (viz. the Phalanstery scene) where people are alienated and de-humanized and women have merely become producers of children for as soon as the Aged Man takes the children to the Common Children's School he immediately sets about to find new mates for Eve and the other women.

Much has been made of the affinities between The Tragedy of Man and other literary works of a similar vein, among them primarily Lessing's Nathan the Wise, Goethe's Faust, Byron's Manfred, and to a lesser extent Cain, and even Ibsen's Peer Gynt. The prime critic to enlighten in this area has been the late Dieter Lotze who has done much to place Madach's work in general, and The Tragedy of Man in particular, within the larger European Romantic framework, particularly with respect to the works of Goethe, Hugo and Lamartine. As well, Lotze examined the literary

connections between Madach's work and that of Lessing. Professor Lotze also did much to delineate the genre of the European poème d'humanité as the one to which The Tragedy of Man rightfully belongs.[21] The work of Esther Leser has re-affirmed the relationships that exist with Goethe and Hegel.[22] There are also two unpublished United States doctoral dissertations which examine the ties with the works of Byron, Shelley, Hugo, Lamartine and Jordan as well as an article showing the influence of Madách on the works of James Joyce.[23]

There are also a number of articles dealing with the problems of translation. The most useful studies are those of Radó[24] and Mark.[25] But by far the question of interpretation has been the prime one and of extreme importance to literary scholars as evidenced in recent published works.[26] While much of the argumentation still lies in the question of historical authentication and the fundamental optimism or pessimism of the play, research is being done in other fields as well. For example, recent criticism includes an examination of Madách's depiction of Paradise in relation to other paradisal literary experiments, Adam's relationship with the Lord, and Dieter Lotze's article examining the use of Madách's play in a contemporary German opera by Peter Michael Hamel.[27]

Of interest with regard to dystopianism are the examinations of The Tragedy of Man, with particular respect to the visions of the future. As Lotze says:

> ... the modern reader may even discover Madách as a pioneer of today's science fiction and not just as a popularizer of history in the fashion on the nineteenth century,...[28]

In this field György Radó's "Hungarian Science Fiction 1860"[29] and George Bisztray's "Man's Biological Future in Hungarian Utopian

Literature"[30] are important. Nevertheless, the discussion of the dystopian nature of Madách's futuristic visions remains a relatively unexplored area in literary criticism and one that is worthy of consideration and study.

Notes

[1]Imre Madách, The Tragedy of Man, trans. J. C. W. Horne, fifth edition (Budapest: Corvina Press, 1963). This shall be used as the primary English edition from which citations shall be made, except in cases where there may arise discrepancies with the Hungarian original. In this event, translations will be my own and so cited. Note: all subsequent references to the work shall be from this edition and cited in the text.

[2]Imre Madách, Az ember tragédiája (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1982). This shall be used as the primary Hungarian edition and shall be considered the original in the event of discrepancies with the English translation used.

[3]Az ember tragédiája was initially published in an 'imprimatur' edition by the Kisfaludy Society (Pest: Gustáv Emich, 1861). A second edition appeared in 1863. The third edition was published by a different agent (Pest: Athenaeum, 1869). Since then innumerable editions have appeared and as a comprehensive listing would not be helpful, only these first three editions have been mentioned here.

[4]Placing The Tragedy of Man into its rightful place within the larger European realm has been the focus of many articles. Among the most helpful are: Dieter P. Lotze, "Madách's Tragedy of Man and the Tradition of the Poème d'Humanité in European Literature," Neohelicon, Vol. VI, No. 1, 1978, p. 235-254, also found in Dieter P. Lotze, Imre Madách (Boston:Twayne, 1981), Chapter 6; József Mezei, "La tragédie chrètienne: La Naissance d'Adam," Acta Litteraria Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, Vol. XV, No. 3-4, 1973, p. 309-326; Béla G. Németh, "À la rencontre de deux époques: À propos de l'anniversaire de Madách," Acta Litteraria Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, Vol. XV, No. 3-4, 1973, p. 271-289; James O'Driscoll, "Imre Madách's The Tragedy of Man", The Hungarian Quarterly, Vol. IV, No. 1-2, Jan.-Apr. 1963, p. 27-43; István Sőtér, "Imre Madách's The Tragedy of Man," The New Hungarian Quarterly, Vol. V, No. 16, Winter 1964, p. 56-66; Gábor Tolnai, "L'anniversaire de l'auteur de la Tragédie de l'Homme", Acta Litteraria Acedemiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, Vol. XV, No. 3-4, 1973, p. 269-270; György Mihály Vajda, "L'élément européen et hongrois dans la Tragédie de l'Homme," Acta Litteraria Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, Vol. XV, No. 3-4, 1973, p. 337-346.

[5]Until the royal decree of May 6, 1784 the official language for all public and official transactions had been Latin. It was mainly the lower classes that spoke Hungarian as the ruling classes usually spoke French or German and some could not even speak Hungarian. The Hungarian literary community's reaction to the decree was manifested in the subsequent reform of the language and alphabet, the institution of the use of Hungarian in schools and places of higher learning and the rise in the number of Hungarian journals and periodicals as well as the key

roles played in this movement by such leading thinkers as Ferenc Kazinczy (1759-1831), István Horvát (1784-1846), Pál Szemere (1785-1861), János Kis (1770-1838), Dániel Berzsenyi (1776-1836) and Sándor Kisfaludy (1772-1844) is aptly examined in Chapter VII, "The Reform of the Language and irodalmi tudat" of Loránt Czigány's The Oxford History of Hungarian Literature: From the Earliest Times to the Present (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 101-119.

[6]Lotze, Imre Madách, p. 132-133.

[7]Frederick Riedl, A History of Hungarian Literature (London: William Heineman, 1906), republished Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1968, p. 121-122.

[8]Czigány, p. 113, 133. Lotze, Imre Madách, p. 143-144.

[9]Lotze, Imre Madách, p. 145.

[10]Riedl, p. 146.

[11]Ibid., p. 215.

[12]Thomas R. Mark, "The Tragedy of Man: Salvation or Tragedy?", Acta Litteraria Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, Vol. XV, No. 3-4, 1973, p. 291-308.

[13]Győző Morvay, Magyarázó tanulmány 'Az ember tragédiájá'-hoz (Budapest: Mihály Molnár, 1897).

[14]Géza Voinovich, Imre Madách és 'Az ember tragédiája' (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1914). A second edition was released in 1922. There exists a shortened German version of this work: Jenő Mohácsi, ed. and trans., Madách und die Tragödie des Menschen (Budapest-Leipzig: Georg Vajna, 1935).

[15]Károly Balogh, Madách, az ember és a költő (Budapest: György Vajna, 1934).

[16]János Barta, Madách Imre (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1942); Béla G. Németh, Türelmetlen és késlekedő félszázad: A romantika után (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Kiadó, 1933); Mihály Szegedy-Maszák, "Life-Conception and Structure, The Tragedy of Man," Acta Litteraria Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, Vol. XV, No. 3-4, 1973, p. 327-335.

[17]Voinovich, Imre Madách és 'Az ember tragédiája; István Sőtér, Álom a történelemről: Madách Imre és 'Az ember tragédiája (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1965). ———, "Madách Imre," Romantika és realizmus (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Kiadó, 1956), p. 217-293.

[18]Károly Horváth, Madách Imre, Irodalomtörténeti közlemények, Vol. LXII, No. 2-4, 1958, p. 247-278, 462-502; ———, Madách Imre, Nagy Magyar Irok (Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, 1984).

[19]József Waldapfel, "Madách igazáért," Irodalmi tanulmányok (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Kiadó, 1957), p. 440-466.

[20]György Lukács, "Madách tragédiája, Magyar irodalom-magyar kultúra (Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, 1970), p. 560-573.

[21]Dieter P. Lotze, "From the 'Goethe of Széphalom' to the 'Hungarian Faust': A Half Century of Goethe Reception in Hungary," Canadian-American Review of Hungarian Studies, Vol. VI, No. 1, 1979, p. 3-19; ———, Imre Madách, Chapters 5 and 6. These are also reproduced individually as: "Madách's Tragedy of Man and the Tradition of the 'Poème d'Humanité' in European Literature"; "Madách's Tragedy of Man: Lessing Echoes in 19th Century Hungary?", Lessing Yearbook, Vol. XI, 1979, p. 133-141; "The Poèmes d'Humanité of Guernsey and Alsó-Sztregova: Victor Hugo's La Légende des Siècles and Imre Madách's The Tragedy of Man," Neohelicon, Vol. V, No. 2, 1977, p. 71-81.

[22]Esther Lesér, "A Hungarian View of the World, Expressed in a Faustian Tragedy: Some Considerations upon Madách's The Tragedy of Man," Canadian-American Review of Hungarian Studies, Vol. V, No. 2, 1978, p. 43-51.

[23]Enikő Molnár Basa, "The Tragedy of Man as an Example of the Poème d'Humanité: An examination of the Poem by Imre Madách with Reference to the Relevant Works of Shelley, Byron, Lamartine and Hugo," University of North Carolina, 1972. Mária Csonka Farnek, "Imre Madách's The Tragedy of Man and Wilhelm Jordan's Demiurgos: A Comparison," State University of New York (Buffalo), 1970. The influence of Madách on Joyce's works is found in A. Fáy, "Probable Byzantine and Hungarian Models of Ulysses and Finnegans Wake," Arcadia, Vol. III, No. 2, 1968, p. 48-72.

[24]György Radó, "Az ember tragédiája a világ nyelvein. 1-6," Filológiai közlöny, Vol. X, 1964, p. 313-353; Vol. XI, 1965, p. 93-124; Vol. XII, 1966, p. 67-108; Vol. XIV, 1968, p. 75-111; Vol. XVII, 1971, p. 382-403; Vol. XVIII, 1972, p. 47-71.

[25]Thomas R. Mark, "Madách Revisited: Toward a New Translation of the Tragedy of Man," Canadian-American Review of Hungarian Studies, Vol. IV, 1977, p. 145-154.

[26] A work offering a valuable overview of the critical stances from 1862 until 1966 is Lajos Kántor, Száz éves harc 'Az ember tragédiájá'-ért, Irodalomtörténeti Füzetek, No. 53 (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1966). Also invaluable is Károly Horváth ed., Madách tanulmányok (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1978), which is a collection of vital articles over a wide scope of perspectives. The most recent critical work is that of Károly Horváth, Imre Madách, Nagy Magyar Irok.

[27] The relationship of Madách's depiction of Paradise with respect to other paradisal experiments is Miklós Hubai, "A Paradicsom Kulcsai ("The Keys of Paradise")," Kortárs, Vol. XXVII, April, 1983, p. 501-507. Adam's relationship with the Lord is examined in László András, "Deus ex ... A Madách-rejtély ("Deus ex ... The Madach Version")", Kortárs, Vol. XXVII, April, 1983, p. 508-526. Finally, the use of Madách's The Tragedy of Man in contemporary German opera is discussed in Dieter Lotze, "Imre Madách is Alive and Well and Dying in Germany; Peter Michael Hamel's Opera 'Ein Menschentraum'," Hungarian Studies Review, Vol. XI, No. 2, Fall, 1984, p. 3-14.

[28] Lotze, Imre Madách, p. 152.

[29] György Radó, "Hungarian Science Fiction 1860," SF Tájékoztató, No. 6, 1972, p. 41-44.

[30] George Bisztray, "Man's Biological Future in Hungarian Utopian Literature," Canadian-American Review of Hungarian Studies, Vol. III, No. 1, Spring, 1976, p. 3-13.

Chapter 2

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The placing of an author into his historical context has an importance, value and validity that is immeasurable in arriving at an understanding of the unique perspective from which a particular literary work is created. This is especially true of Imre Madách: his times did not only shape his consciousness and form a backdrop to his work as for most authors, but, to a larger extent, his times were integral to and inseparable from his work. They were not merely a backdrop, but rather composed the backbone, the foundation and cornerstones that anchored his work. This is perhaps nowhere else more evident than in The Tragedy of Man.[1]

In his life, the events and people with profound effect were many. It is necessary to provide a short sketch of the events in Madách's life here in order to see their effect on The Tragedy of Man, particularly events that shaped his cultural, economic, familial, intellectual, philosophical, political and social perceptions. They are recorded in various sources and, for the most part, have been accepted by scholars without dispute.[2]

Madách was born into an old aristocratic family that belonged to the landed gentry and had resided at Alsósztregova (present-day Dolná Strehová, Czechoslovakia) in what was then the county of Nógrád in northern Hungary since the 1400's. The family was a wealthy and

illustrious one that had provided Hungary with important personalities in various fields: law, literature, the military, medicine and religion. The family had converted to Lutheranism in the seventeenth century and had been active in their faith. However, Imre's grandfather, Sándor, had re-converted back to Catholicism.

His family's emphasis upon and concern with religious faith was reinforced by his father's marriage to Anna Majthényi who was also from a wealthy old aristocratic family. Anna was an intelligent, strong and deeply religious woman and became responsible for her five young children in 1834 when Madách's father died. Madách was only eleven years old at the time.

The depth of her religious convictions can be seen in her role in Madách's love life. In 1840, Madách had fallen in love with the fourteen-year-old sister of his two university friends, Albert and Menyhért Lónyay. Both Madách and Etelka Lónyay were still rather young, but it was primarily Anna Madách's clear indications that she would be angered at and displeased with this alliance to the Protestant Lónyay family, that managed to destroy the relationship in its infancy. Anna also objected to Erzsébet Fráter, the seventeen-year-old girl whom Madách had met in the winter of 1844-45. Again Anna's main reasons for objecting to Erzsébet were that her family was Protestant and not of comparable wealth or rank to the Madáchs. Madách, however, persisted and in the summer of 1845 they were married, but the displeasure of Madách's mother was so intense that she would not live in the same house as the newlyweds. They were forced to reside at Csesztve, a more remote part of the Madách estate. Anna's rigidly-held and actively-expressed

religious beliefs no doubt contributed to the estrangement that developed between them after they moved back to live with her in Alsósztregova, and hastened the eventual breakdown of the marriage. Erzsébet's public infidelities compounded the problem. After the failure of the marriage, Madách continued living in the old family house, with his mother taking care of his three children.

The effects of the tradition of active religious faith in his family coupled with the real, zealous beliefs of his mother who had deminated Madách's family environment for most of his life are reflected in his choice of the most serious subject matter for The Tragedy of Man. Although he had written much before, none of his previous works had been so large in scope or perspective as The Tragedy of Man and most of these works are not considered to possess overwhelming literary value. Indeed none of his other literary works have been as widely read, disseminated or examined on an international level as the Tragedy.

Among Madách's lesser-known and lesser-praised works by literary critics are his first book of poetry which was published in 1840, entitled Lyre Blossoms (Lántvirágok). It had been written as a result of his having met and fallen in love with Etelka Lónyay, Adeline in the poems. In 1843 he re-interpreted Sophocles' The Trachinian Women and wrote Man and Woman (Férfi és nő). It was submitted to a Hungarian Academy of Sciences contest but it aroused little enthusiasm. From 1841 to 1845 Madách produced much work. In the prose play form he dramatized familiar historical scenes in Commodus, Andrew of Naples (Nápolyi Endre), Queen Mary (Mária Királynő) and Csák's Last Days (Csák Végnapjai), which was published posthumously. He examined his

contemporary society in Just a Joke (Csak tréfa) and Good Reputation and Virtue (Jó név és erény). He also wrote the short stories: "Zebedee Duló's Adventures" ("Duló Zebedus Kalandjai"), "The Ecce Homo" ("Az ecce homo"), "Chronicle of the Fate of Two Coins" ("Krónika két pénzdarab sorsárol"), "Everday Story" ("Hétköznapi történet"). He began an essay entitled "Discourse on Art" ("Müvészeti értekezés") and with his friends Pál Szontágh and Ferenc Pulszky co-authored the satirical epigrams "Nógrád Picture Gallery" ("Nógrádi Képcsarnok"). In 1859 Madách completed the drama The Civilizer (A civilizátor) just prior to beginning the work on The Tragedy of Man. This was a comedy in the tradition of Aristophanes and ridiculed the regime of Alexander Bach, the Austrian Minister of the Interior who imposed an autocratic and centralized bureaucracy on Hungary. In his recent work on the author of the Tragedy, Károly Horváth describes this play as "Madách's opinion of the economic and nationalism question."[3] It would be accurate to say that much interest in Madách's other works are largely a result of the interest aroused by The Tragedy of Man.

It is in The Tragedy of Man that Madách grapples with profoundly difficult questions concerning the relationship between man and God. His trouble with a total acceptance of or a complete rebellion from traditional religious views as manifested in his mother is obvious in two main ways. In his personal life his rebellion against these views is seen in his ill-fated marriage to Erzsébet Fráter which was to some extent in defiance of Anna Madách's interference and insistence upon a Catholic daughter-in-law which had previously destroyed his relationship with Etelka Lónyay and threatened to occur once again. This aspect of

rebelliousness is seen in his literary endeavours in the continual verbal duelling and sparring between Adam and Lucifer throughout The Tragedy of Man.

This verbal interplay seems to be a representation of the conflicting emotions Madách himself no doubt felt. Lucifer is not an absolute evil figure, but an intelligent creation who poses extremely difficult questions about human life, nature and belief, in the Miltonic, Goethean and Byronic tradition of the intelligent and occasionally even admirable and insightful Satanic figure. He asks what we ouselves ask when faced with situations difficult to comprehend.

Alternatively, Adam is not an absolute hero. His desire to understand, his confusion and even his despair are all-too-human and familiar characteristics and feelings, ways of coping with the unpleasant and often seemingly senseless aspects of life. In Madách's lifetime, old, accepted absolutes such as the Church were being eroded and broken down by various forces, such as the rise of science and the technological developments that this brought with it. Madách uses the probing verbal interplay between Adam and Lucifer to come to terms with the disappearance of the old order and possibly to formulate a new one.

The wealth and status of the Madách family also had a great effect on Imre's writing. These allowed for the best possible private education available to the members of the privileged class. The circle of friends who visited Alsósztregova often included academics, politicians, scholars and writers and Madách's interaction with these people from his very young years onwards enriched his life by immensely broadening his horizons. Invaluable opportunities and resources were

available to him and he took advantage of them. He was both well-read and well-educated and in addition to his Hungarian, he attained fluency in German, French and Latin from a very early age. The Madách children had an art instructor, a dancing teacher, a private tutor and a French governess. Imre composed a few French verses at the age of five or six and also as a child, he wrote and edited Literary Mixture (Literatúrai Kevercs) a weekly journal for his family that contained short essays and examples of creative writing. These facts combined with his healthy intellectual curiosity insured that he had contacts and familiarity with past literary developments and contemporary trends in nineteenth-century Europe. The environment at Alsósztregova with its extensive library was condusive to the development and nurturing of Madách's ecclectic intellectual interests.[4]

Madách's healthy, vigorous intellect is reflected in the fact that in 1837, at the age of fourteen he left home and went to Pest to earn a university degree in law. While there, his friends included Counts Manó and Gyula Andrássy and Albert and Menyhért Lónyay, all of whom were considered among Hungary's social and political elite.[5] This brought Madách into contact with Hungary's political situation at the level where the events leading to the revolution of 1848 were actually happening. This group became very close and began a weekly journal "Mixtura" to which Madách regularly contributed poetry.

The wealth of his family allowed Madách to develop a base of knowledge and interest which was necessary to examine the universal, philosophical concerns of The Tragedy of Man. To depict and study the past, present and future of mankind's history, a vast store of

information must be drawn upon in order to combine elements and be able to highlight concerns such as man's cruelty to his fellow man in The Tragedy of Man. The literary allusions present show a familiarity with such leading thinkers as Cormenin-Timon, Goethe, Alexander von Humboldt, Hegel and Fourier.

The intellectual curiousity which can be seen in Madách's thirst for knowledge was probably, ironically, strengthened by his weak and fragile health that plagued him all of his life. The end of his relationship with Etelka and his subsequent health failure made it necessary for him to withdraw from the university to convalesce. Even after successfully finishing his studies and obtaining his appointment to public office in Nógrád county, he was forced to resign time after time because of health problems.[6] It was no doubt because of this delicacy that he led the rather quiet life of the intellectual, but he was never to be truly withdrawn from the larger world in which he could never totally participate. This fragile health also prevented him from actively engaging in the Revolutionary War of 1848-49 which he did avidly support in his thoughts and writings. A positive result of his legal and administrative career was that he met Pál Szontágh who was to become his closest friend and confidante.

The politics of his time also played a major role in the formation of Madách, the writer. As stated before, his friends included members of Hungary's political elite and the politically eventful times and circumstances developed more than just an interest in Madách. He held liberal, progressive views and was concerned about prevailing social conditions. There is evidence of this not only in his reports on

Nógrád affairs in Pesti Hírlap, the only national newspaper under the nom de plume of 'Timon', a reference to Louis Marie de la Haye Cormenin-Timon whose works he knew and admired, but also in the apalling conditions portrayed in the London scene with people having become mere commodities to be bought and sold. Madách supported József Eötvös' Centralists, a group of intellectuals of similar persuasion. No official party could be formed, because formal political parties were not allowed in Hungary prior to 1847. With time Madách assumed the key role in this group within the Nógrád county assembly.

The 1848-49 unsuccessful Revolution had a personal impact on Madách that not only sharpened his political awareness but also dealt him several severe personal blows from which he never truly recovered and which are reflected in his writing. Because of his poor health he had remained in Csesztve while his mother was in Pest and their letters meticulously outline the occurring events. An idealistic and patriotic brother, Pál, had been in the winter campaign and in the spring of 1849, after Nógrád had surrendered, Madách had tried to persuade Pál to return home where the risk of prosecution for supporting the Revolution would not be as great. Pál did not return and while trying to rejoin Lajos Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot and political leader, he died of pneumonia. Madách's favourite sister, Mari, with whom he had been especially close, and her family had died a horrific death when in trying to escape from Transylvania they were murdered by Romanian bandits and their bodies fed to pigs. But Madách himself was also personally affected by these turbulent events. He was incarcerated for nearly a year in Pozsony and then in Pest for having given shelter in

1851 to János Rákóczy, a political fugitive and distant relative who had been Kossuth's secretary. Rákóczy escaped, but Madách was arrested. It is alleged that he underwent beatings during his imprisonment.

Thus the circumstances in which Madách lived served to heighten his political consciousness. Hungary had lost her attempt at independence and freedom and as a result there was renewed oppression from their Austrian rulers under the regime of Alexander Bach. Indeed the oppression during these years (1850's) was so intense that poets had to use much allegory in their works. One such poet, Mihály Tompa, was threatened by the government with imprisonment for his single poem 'To the Stork' ('A gólyának'), in which the narrator urges the stork to fly away because there is no spring, meadows are cemetaries, lakes are filled with blood and if the stork meets anyone who has already left it must tell them that people here are dying and disappearing in disunity.

The Madách family had suffered major tragedies. Madách himself was incarcerated for his political acts. All of these things combined with his failed marriage, his earlier work and his vast knowledge, shaped Madách into the author that wrote The Tragedy of Man. Echoes of his sufferings can be found in the oppressed workers of the London of the Industrial Revolution (Scene XI), the tortured characterization of Kepler (Scene VIII and X), the tragedy of the condemned man and his family and the incarcerated Luther, Cassuis, Plato and Michelangelo (Scene XII) who are more imprisoned by the enslavement of their respective unique genuises than by the orders of fasting and isolation in their cells. Perhaps Frederick Riedl, the literary historian, sums it up most adequately in his History of Hungarian Literature:

> Imagine a man ... highly sensitive and contemplative by nature and inclined to torture himself with all kinds of doubts and to take a tragic view of life; then place him in a period when national aspirations have been stifled, an age of oppression and impotent resentment; add to the grief of the patriot the sadness of domestic bereavements and the pang of the injured husband and we shall understand the state of mind in which Madách wrote The Tragedy of Man.[7]

The inseparability of writing and life for Madách is clear in his inaugural address to the Kisfaludy Society which published The Tragedy of Man, and which was entitled "The Mutual Impact of Aesthetics and Society" ("Az aestheitika és társadalom viszonyos befolyása"). A stong influence here was the head of the society János Arany, the leading thinker and Poet Laureate, of Hungary of the time. Indeed it was Arany who edited The Tragedy of Man, but as can be seen in the original handwritten manuscript with Arany's notations, that has been reproduced in facsimile by the Akadémiai Kiadó in Budapest in 1973, the changes suggested by Arany only involved grammatical and stylistic aspects of the work. The themes, ideas and development of the characters were Madách's own work and remained untouched. Indeed Arany was so enthusiastic about the work that in a letter to his fellow poet Mihály Tompa he wrote that here was "the first talent since Petőfi who shows a completely independent direction" in his writing.[8] No doubt it was this enthusiasm with the work that insured its publication by the society.

The failed marriage and, to some extent, Madách's relationship with his strong mother are seen in his concern with and interest in the role of women. Earlier works like Man and Woman (Férfi és nő), Queen Maria (Mária Királynő), Just a Joke (Csak tréfa) and Good Reputation and Virtue (Jó név és erény) examine the role of women and the relationships that exist between the sexes. So interested was Madách in this issue

that upon his inauguration as a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences he wrote a speech entitled "On Women, Particularly from an Aesthetic Point of View" ("A nőről, különösen aesthetikai szempontbol"), but illness prevented him from reading his own speech and it was read for him. Trying to understand and come to terms with women was for Madách as complex and multi-faceted as much of life was for him. In the Tragedy, Eve, the ultimate woman, is alternatively portrayed as a positive and negative figure with rarely there being a balanced combination of these two extremes. At times she is a major character because of her relationship to Adam, while at other points she seems merely another figure in the large cast of characters of the play.

All of these influences, all of these interests shaped and were necessary to create Madách, the author of The Tragedy of Man, a person fully in touch with and interested in what was happening around him, yet unable to take an active physical role because of his weak constitution. Madách was perhaps more than most, a product of his times. Coming from a privileged background yet understanding the need for change in the political structures and mechanisms, he saw the direction in which Europe was heading and incorporated this into his visions of the future that provided and continue to provide a warning.

Notes

[1] There are a number of studies examining the extent to which Madach and his work are inseparably intertwined with the time in which he lived. By far the most comprehensive and recent of these which details meticulously the individual events of Madách's life and their impact on his writings is: Horváth's, Madách Imre, Nagy Magyar Irok. Also most helpful and extremely well-written are Horváth's, Madách Imre, Irodalom torteneti Közlemények, and Sőtér's, Álom történelemrol: Madách Imre és Az ember tragédiája.

[2] More comprehensive and complete biographies of Madach may be found in the previously-mentioned works (See Note 1). Shorter biographies may be found in any reputable encyclopaedia or survey of Hungarian literature. Recommended are the Encyclopaedia Britannica and Antal Szerb, Magyar Irodalomtörténet (Budapest: Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1934), Seventh Edition.

[3] Horváth, Madách Imre, Nagy Magyar Irok, p. 5. This work has not been translated into English. The translation is mine and the original quotation appears as follows "A civilizátor. Madách véleménye a társadalmi és a nemzetiségi kérdésröl."

[4] A catalogue of the works in the library was drawn up by Jozsef Szűcsi in "Madách Könyvtára" ("Madách's Library"), Magyar Könyvszemle, Vol. XXIII, 1915, p. 5-28. The collection had been greatly enhanced by both his grandfather whose interests had been mainly the law, philosophy and theology and by his father who was interested in Hungarian and French literatures and history. While the contents of the family library do not necessarily imply that Madách was familiar with each and every volume, it reflects the broad range of interests in the Madách family, reveals the priority placed upon having an environment conducive to a humanistic education, shows the priority placed upon knowledge, discloses knowledge and familiarity with contemporary developments in various intellectual areas throughout Europe, and exposes the vast ecclectic body of knowledge upon which Madách could draw in writing The Tragedy of Man.

Among foreign authors there were titles by: Dante Alighieri, Lord Byron, Louis Marie de la Haye Cormenin-Timon, François de Salignac de la Mothe Fénélon, Ludwig Feuerbach, Charles Fourier, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Georg Wilhelm Friederich Hegel, Heinrich Heine, Victor Hugo, Alexander von Humboldt, Immanuel Kant, Thomas à Kempis, Jean de La Fontaine, Martin Luther, Moses Mendelssohn, John Milton, Jean Baptiste Molière, Thomas Paine, Plato, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, William Shakespeare, Friederich von Schiller, Voltaire and Edward Young.

Among the Hungarian thinkers there were volumes by: János Arany, József Bajza, Gábor Dajka, Count József Dessewffy, András Dugovics, József Katona, Ferenc Kazinczy, both Károly and Sándor Kisfaludy, Ferenc Kölcsey, Sándor Petőfi, István Széchényi, Ede Szigligeti, Ferenc Toldy, Imre Vachot and Mihály Vörösmarty.

[5]Over twenty years later Gyula Andrássy became the Prime Minister of Hungary following the 1867 Compromise which created the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Andrássy made Menyhért Lónyay his Minister of Finance. Eventually Lónyay succeeded him as Prime Minister. This gives some indication about the high level of Hungarian political life to which Madách was a party.

[6]In the public service Madách held the positions of Deputy Clerk, elected Honorary County Notary, County Court Judge and Chief Commissioner with the responsibility for military adminstration for Nógrád county. From all of these he was forced to resign because of his weak health. In 1861 Madách was elected as the representative for Balassagyarmat to the National Diet in Pest and was noted to be an eloquent speaker.

[7]Riedl, A History of Hungarian Literature, p. 260.

[8]Horváth, Madách Imre, Nagy Magyar Irok, p. 160, The original appears as "Első tehetség Petőfi óta, ki egészen önálló irányt mutat."

Chapter 3

THE DYSTOPIAN VISIONS OF THE FUTURE

Before the futuristic dystopian visions found in The Tragedy of Man can be examined, a proper definition of dystopia is necessary in order to have a solid point of reference. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as

> An imaginary place or condition in which everything is as bad as possible; opposite of utopia; cactopia; ... what they appear to favour is too bad to be practicable. ... 'inverted utopia.' ... describe not a world we should like to live in but one we must be sure to avoid.[1]

While Madách's visions may not be "too bad to be practicable" or as "bad as possible", they definitely describe a world "we must be sure to avoid" if at all possible because of the shortcomings and negative aspects that are to be found in them. They are "'inverted utopias'" which are attempts by Madách to create an awareness that the seeds of dismal future life were present in his own lifetime. There are hints that they contain elements of an inspired prophecy. They are as well a personal attempt on Madách's part to understand and come to terms with the direction in which the world is moving.

To begin, much can be learned about these visions of the future by examining the settings of each of the four scenes. The London scene (XI) is set in the mid-nineteenth century at a fair located in the streets between the Tower of London and the river Thames. There is a "motley and noisy Crowd, surging and murmuring, to and fro" (p.122).

Adam has become an elderly man and is found standing with Lucifer on a bastion of the Tower looking down. It is dusk and evening approaches. Both the elderliness of the protoganist and the approaching darkness of evening suggest an ending and closing, both of life and of the day. It is also important that Adam and Lucifer are looking down at the Fair. In order to participate in it, they too must go down, physically and spiritually. The Crowd made up of motley murmuring members is somewhat threatening and its initial speech telling of the new worlds that arise, also necessitates telling of the fall of old worlds:

> With each wave new worlds arise,
> Downward sinks one mighty billow,
> Mounts another to the skies.
> Now thy fear the man shall perish,
> By the many, crushed and slain;
> Now thou fearest lest a million
> Die that one may live and reign.
> This day thou for learning tremblest,
> And that day for poetry;
> Seekest in the path of order
> To confine the raging sea.
> Thou shalt draw out water only,
> Though thou strive and toil and weep;
> Thunders on the ceaseless ocean,
> Laughs, with laughter loud and deep,
> Let it roar, and let it thunder,
> Life to life shall set the bounds.
>
> (p. 122)

The very number of words with negative and even apocalyptic connotations used in this introductory passage to the scene greatly outweigh the positive and neutralizing words Madách employs here. Words used with negative and apocalyptic connotations: downward, sinks, fear, perish, many, crushed, slain, fearest, die, tremblest, seekest, confine, raging, only, strive, toil, weep, thunders, ceaseless, roar, thunder and bounds, outnumber the positive or neutral words used by Madach in this passage: new, arise, mounts, million, live, reign, learning, poetry, order,

laughs, laughter, loud and deep.

Also Adam and Lucifer are found on the bastion of the Tower of London, a most well-fortified, well-defended spot that is regarded as something of a defensive stronghold, as say, opposed to only a wall, but this is the stronghold of a building which symbolizes punishment and even death as the Tower was a prison in addition to being a castle. People were sent here to die and often without just or sufficient cause. Thus the tone set at the very beginning of the scene is one of a negative and apocalyptic nature. The tone does not foreshadow or indicate that a positive, optimistic scene is about to be revealed to the audience, but rather a scene opposite to this in tone and atmosphere, as well as content.

The setting also reveals much of what will be found in scene XII. Adam and Lucifer ascend from within the earth to find themselves in the centre of the court of a grand, U-shaped Phalanstery (p. 152). The ground floor of the building consists of open hallways with pillars on either side. On the right, workmen are busy amid whirling machinery and on the left a Scientist is studying in a museum which contains objects of natural history, mechanical tools, and astronomical and chemical instruments. All of the people who belong to the Phalanstery wear the same uniform and it is daytime.

The upward movement of Adam and Lucifer ascending from the earth is a nurturing positive sign. They come up from the earth, always a good maternal symbol, and as is manifested in the Spirit of the Earth that appears on more than one occasion in the play. However, this note of optimism and positive feeling is detracted by a few factors.

While the busy nature of the workmen in whirling machinery has the positive aspects of industry and efficiency, they are from the very beginning set in opposition to the solitary Scientist in the opposing hall, suggesting that somehow the Scientist is, if not more valued, definitely set apart. From the very onset the delineations between these two endeavors are made explicitly clear and there is a sense that because of this opposition they are on two very different sides of, not only the building, but also of life because of their different view and perspectives. The dichotomy is set up: many men against one man, moving inanimate objects and men against stationary 'used-to-be' animate objects, for instance the once domesticated animals which are now mere relics in a museum, dynamic against contemplative, as well as unskilled and unschooled mass labour against specialized and knowledgeable selective and almost elitist leadership. People and forces are from the very first in opposition to one another; the only thing they have in common is that both strangely lack other human contacts.

Another detracting factor is the use of uniforms by all of the people in the Phalanstery. While the "sameness" in the peoples' appearances might provide a sense of identification, security and stability, it also implies the arrival of a faceless mass society in which one person is virtually indistinguishable from another, because all are almost robot-like in their existence. This is supported by two facts, that the people have no names, only numbers as their primary means of identification, and by the need for Adam and Lucifer to don on similar uniforms before entering. Adam must cut his hair, always a symbol of unique individuality:

LUCIFER First we must cast aside our former shapes
For if I came as Lucifer, and thou
As Adam, in this world of learned men,
None should believe in us; we should be killed
Or else be clapped within an alembic;
A study for the chemists.
ADAM Thou dost jest.
LUCIFER 'Tis so within the world of Intellect.
(p. 153-4)

The world of science represented by the Phalanstery for which Madách had such high and positive hopes as indicated in the setting, is a world of learned men and intellect which would ironically be hostile to Adam and Lucifer in their true forms, because they are distinct. The strong need to have everyone conform, even strangers, already forebodes that this scientific world is not 'as it should be' for true knowledge and science would not be intimidated by the different, the other, but would accept it with curiosity, interest and enthusiasm. These negative feelings about the scientific world of the Phalanstery culminate at the end of the scene when Adam and Lucifer symbolically sink into the ground, and out-of-sight. Mankind is aging. The downward, vanishing motion seems to wipe Adam and Lucifer from the face of the earth and while they descend into the positive earth, they disappear symbolically, as the indiyiduality of the members of the Phalanstery have also disappeared into the concept of the Mass Man.

The scenery in space (XIII) also reveals much of what the scene will be. Adam has once again become an aged man, a tell-tale indication that all is not at its peak or optimum level, and is flying with Lucifer away from the Earth, the natural environment of man. They fly so far away that the Earth appears as only one of the many stars filling the distant horizon. The Earth becomes indistinguishable from all of the

other stars, and strangely like any working member of the Phalanstery in the preceding scene. This 'indistinguishable' planet is the same one that at the beginning of the play was described by a Choir of Angels in this way:

> See how proudly whirls yon planet,
> Confident in flaming glory,
> Yet but the unwitting servant
> Of a dim, far constellation.
> Lo, this little star that glimmers,
> Seems a pale lamp, yet the vast world
> Of a myriad creation.
> ...
> See how modest shines the destined
> Star of love. To mankind ever
> May the guiding hand preserve it.
> An eternal consolation.
> ...
> Come, beloved, youthful spirit,
> With thy orb that ever changes,
> Wearing now the cloak of sadness,
> Now of joy, now white, now verdant,
> Come, receive high heaven's blessing.
>
> (p. 2-3)

The "star of love" has lost its pride. A regression has taken place. The star that was once chosen among all the others to be blessed by God, has now disappeared back into indistinguishability from the myriad of stars. There is no longer anything unique or individual about it from the great distance in space at which Adam and Lucifer are flying. There is nothing to indicate that this planet is the home of man. The negativity of this fact reaches an extreme when Adam loses consciousness and is forced to return to earth. He cannot be like the angels or a full partner in the spiritual world, free of all ties with the material world. Adam is human and therefore is tied inextricably and inevitably to the earth as long as man is limited by the boundaries of his humanity.

The Eskimo setting (XIV) reveals a great deal about the dystopian nature of the environment as well. This short scene takes place in a land of snow and ice, in a mountainous and treeless landscape (p. 180). The death of the sun, which the Scientist of the Phalanstery predicted to happen in approximately four thousand years (p. 162) has come to pass. Madách has moved the play very far into the future. The sun is red and without rays and is encased within misty clouds. There is only dim daylight. The hut of the Eskimo is among stunted junipers and birches. Adam has become a "broken-down aged man supporting himself with a staff" (p. 180). Again he and Lucifer descend to begin this scene.

The barren and sterile environment is only capable of supporting a stunted form of life both physically and spiritually. In the physical world, all of the living things are dwarfish in nature, from the trees to the Eskimo himself. Spiritually this is also true, for the Eskimo mistakes Adam and Lucifer to be gods who have appeared ~~to~~ him on earth and offers them a sacrifice of the first seal he hunts in order that they spare his life (p. 182). The Eskimo is of such a physical nature, with so little spiritual development that he has become a part of this biological and spiritual order.

LUCIFER By what right dost thou sacrifice a seal
To save thy life by taking other life?

THE ESKIMO Because I am the stronger: for I see
The fish doth eat the worm; the seal, the fish
And thus, in turn, myself I eat the seal.
(p. 182)

Also, importantly, at the end of the scene Adam is drawn into the Eskimo hut by Eve who has also regressed tremendously, but Adam is completely repulsed.

I her embrace, who held Aspasia
Within these arms! This woman, in whose face
I see yet dawn the features that were hers,
But like as though, whilst yet her lips did kiss,
She became beast.

(p. 186)

He manages to free himself and convinces Lucifer to end his long dream. So despite the negative tone of this scene something positive happens, it ends when Adam asks for it to end.

It is in this way that Madách reveals the dystopian, negative nature of his visions of the future through the settings he uses. It seems that he consciously creates the setting to let the reader and audience know that these visions of the future are not idealistic imaginings, but are rooted deeply in mid-nineteenth century reality. He does this by using actual physical places or objects which have a physically negative nature or by using places and objects which are symbolically negative, such as the interplay of the downward and upward motion of Adam and Lucifer and the use of the stunted environment to indicate the degenerated nature of man in the land of ice and snow. It is important to remember that these visions are all contained within a dream and that a dream is in the final analysis, neither true nor false and therefore open-ended. This leaves room to interpret and possibly change the warnings Madách provides. Also the language of the dream is symbolic and thus the symbolic aspects used by Madách are of extreme importance when arriving at an understanding of the futuristic visions.

The construction of these scenes is in fact quite similar. In all of them Adam and Lucifer come upon a new environment, they enter this new environment and act, for the main part, as observers. It must be pointed out that this is another of the distinguishing features of these

visions of the future. In each of the previous scenes Adam played a major role, assuming the characters of famous historical characters, such as Kepler, Tancred and Danton, merely to name a few. In the visions of the future Adam plays a far less active role. He watches from the periphery and is drawn into the action usually because of his outrage at the situations he has the opportunity to observe.

In all of the scenes, there is a climax of sorts, the Dance of Death in London, the refusal by the Scientist to allow Adam and Eve to become mates in the Phalanstery, the loss of consciousness in space by Adam because he seeks to break the seal to the secret of God, and his repulsion at the amorous advances of the Eskimo's wife, the degenerate Eve. To alleviate the point of conflict Adam and Lucifer withdraw from the scene through a variety of means: an abrupt realization of Eve's transfiguration, sinking into the ground, returning to earth and waking up. But the introduction of the basic structure of the new environment, entry into it, observing the happenings, partaking in the events, arriving at a point of conflict or crisis, and finally withdrawing from the scene, is a pattern that remains the same for all of Madách's visions of the future.

The thematic content of these scenes also varies greatly, but the broad, universal, philosophical questions raised in them are in the same vein. The London scene is clearly from Madách's own time in the nineteenth century. The Industrial Revolution of Europe, its results and the subsequent need for reforms is obvious. What is interesting is that Hungary at the time was not an industrialized nation, in fact, it might be quite accurate to state that it was relatively backward with

its agricultural power base.

Priscilla Robertson in her book Revolutions of 1848: A Social History examines Hungary's economic situation just prior to 1848 in Chapter XIII, "The Modernisation of Hungary."[2] Here she maintains that Hungary was agriculturally based and economically backward with its upper enfranchised classes ingrown and passionately political. Travellers were rare and outlandish customs and cultural phenomena such as thirty-six course meals, minimum three day stays anywhere so that the host would not be offended, roaming gypsies and vagabonds, still flourished. While the Kingdom of Hungary comprised more than one-half of the land area of the Empire, it had only 2,000 miles of passable roads. No credit was allowed and the law of entail which prevented landowners from mortgaging their estates, insured the highest interest rates in all of Europe and made it impossible to raise capital, a plight that was examined by Count István Széchényi in his book Hitel (Credit) which was published in 1830 and received with great enthusiasm. It served to articulate formally the economic problems that were to have extreme political implications in 1848.[3]

Madách clearly obtained the knowledge of the Industrial Revolution and the dangers it presented from his readings about the rest of Europe. His concerns about the direction industrialization was leading are most eloquently expressed in this scene, where people are to be bought and sold like merchandise, everyone has his price, manufacturers wonder how they can possibly get more work out of their already-overworked workers and money is the motivator of all actions and the basis of all things. But the extent of the dystopian nature of this pragmatic philosophy is

seen in the culminating Dance of Death symbolizing a moral and spiritual death of the individual and mankind, wherein everyone wants something else and there is no mutual cooperation because people do not work together, but only for themselves:

THE SHOWMAN	Now the comedy at length is played, Others, merry, not myself, I made.
INNKEEPER	All have drunk their wine, and so to all Good-night, and sweet sleep upon you fall.
GIRL	Sold are all my blossoms. On my tomb Other violets anon shall bloom.
THE GIPSY WOMAN	Each would know what fate before him lay, Now in fear his eyes are turned away.
LOVEL	Vainly in my treasure joy I sought, Now I find repose that costeth nought.
A WORKMAN	Ended is the week, the toil and stress, Now I rest from all its weariness.
A LAD	Sweet my dream, the waking was but pain, Come, sweet dream, I follow thee again.
A SOLDIER	Strong and bold I was to challenge all, Now within the miry pit I fall.
THE CONDEMNED MAN	Chain, bide with poor dust, this body bind, Through this gate a new law I shall find.
THE MOUNTEBANK	Each would have the other think him wise, Now the truth all view with startled eyes.

(p. 150-1)

They all must die because money has insured that they separate themselves from each other because it allows the characters, representatives of all aspects of society, to consider themselves independent of one another and this egocentric self-interest results in disunity and dischord which inherently implies and assumes chaos and inevitable death. All human feelings of brotherhood have died and thus the dance has meaning on symbolic and philosophical levels. Without each other we are nothing. It is only Eve who represents the "soul of love, of poesy, of youth"(p. 151) that is not destroyed. She is lifted

up, out and away in a transfiguration of sorts, from the London shown by Madách.

The danse macabre also symbolizes a change in Madách's creative possibilities. Until now he has been able to show historical scenes because he know of them in hindsight. While the London scene was in the future, with respect to his own lifetime, it was only slightly in the future and he could use many events as the rising influence of industrialization, the effects of which were just beginning to be felt in the Hungary of the mid-eighteen hundreds, and merely project them a little further. The Phalanstery, Space and Eskimo scenes are so far in the future that, although Madách could not rely on his knowledge of history and his own milieu as he had previously, he was much freer. He was free to show situations that would illustrate his main concerns, at least freer than he had been until this point in the work. In the historical scenes characters and events could not be altered completely, only emphasis could be shifted to illustrate his main concerns. The final three dystopian visions placed no restrictions or limitations upon Madách's imaginative ability, while in the previous scenes, he had to work within an already-established framework. The shift from a creative position able to draw upon history into another creative position of greater freedom is symbolically incorporated into the danse macàbre.

The Phalanstery scene shows elements of Fourier's plans about the actual use of phalanstères, but there are also hints of Plato's Republic, because the young, in this society, get nothing. Youth has no rights and takes no part in the actual day-to-day existence of the Phalanstery. They are not active participants in their growth.

The young are not even consulted in matters that have to do with their own future. They are expected to pursue the schooling and enter the vocation and lifestyle that has been chosen for them by the Aged Man. This has tremendous implications for the future of mankind. Devoid of family contact and warmth, feelings of the brotherhood of man can never be nurtured. The inability to choose their lives for themselves guarantees them a life filled with oppression and lacking any form of individuality or identity. Always there will be those that make decisions and those that do not. There can be no hope that the people of this society will ever overcome humanity's past record of servitude, inequality and inhumanity towards one another.

The utilitarianism practiced here does not take into account man's individual and unique character, or even the multi-faceted nature of his being. Only the rational and useful are cultivated. All other aspects of the human psyche are considered signs of madness. The new Luther, Cassius, Plato and Michelangelo are forced to undergo humiliating and degrading experiences for their minor aberrations from the accepted order, but the limitation of their full human potential is a far, far greater punishment for them than the punishments meted out by the Aged Man. Also, the destruction of the family unit adds greatly to the fragmentation of all that is human. The importance of the emotional welfare of humans is disregarded because there is no scientific or rational need for this. The separation of mother and child is a heart-wrenching scene that shows the impact of placing science as the most important consideration in human life. Science is unable to solve the deeply emotional and deeply human problem at hand, that of the

separation of a mother and her child, and is thus incapable of dealing with the entire spectrum of human emotion and experience. Science of the sort portrayed by the dogmatic despot, the Scientist, is not only most disillusioning, but also only partial and always incomplete.

The use of phrenology to determine what the children will be reflects Madách's own interest in the topic.[4] While an interest in the parasciences may be considered stimulating or thought-provoking, there are possible dangers when they are used as the sole criterion to determine something as important as someone's lifelong livelihood. It is also interesting to note that it is because of the phrenology issue that the scene becomes a dramatic one, for Adam here changes his status from an onlooker and spectator to that of an avid participant, indeed so much so that Lucifer has to restrain him from doing violence with the sword of the museum.

The end of the Phalanstery marks the complete movement of Madách into dystopian visions that have a different basis. The London scene was a dystopia which showed a man-made, artificial society 'gone wrong' and one that was historical, in that it followed as a result of the preceding scene. So to a large extent was the Phalanstery scene, but here already the focus was shifting. The shift is one from man-made dystopias to biological-ecological dystopias. Already in the Phalanstery scene the Scientist states that the sun will die in 4000 years. The biological-ecological process that will destroy the earth, and therefore man, has begun and is inevitable. Perhaps most importantly this is something that is not man-made, not something created by man and has not become a dystopia as a result of man's

actions. This is a dystopia that man is completely powerless to influence, much less control or change. At best man can try to cope with occurring biological and ecological changes. The Space scene involves the spiritual and physical implications of man finding himself in a completely foreign biological environment and his inevitable inability to sustain life there. The setting of the frozen desolate wasteland with its degenerate Eskimo life is also a manifestation of the change in the earth's ecology. Although Adam is horrified by the 'survival of the fittest' way of life that is a constant search for food, it must be remembered that the Eskimo has only become so in a reaction against or an attempt to cope with the drastic change in the ecology of the earth. The death of the sun has forced mankind to concern himself with only the most basic of pursuits, simple survival. Ironically this is a dystopia that we cannot avoid.

The scene in space also has in it many of the universal themes in which Madách is interested. After the Phalanstery scene Adam must break out for two reasons: firstly, because the rational logic found here is simply unbearable any longer, and secondly, because the earth has become unproductive. The only other alternative would seem to be a move to another planet, but there are no such possibilities present here or within our own solar system. Perhaps the earth could be used as a base of sorts. But the move into space for Adam and his limited knowledge and experience is a symbolic entry into the spirit world. However Adam as a possible spirit with his human limitations is simply too spiritual an experience for him at this time. A great deal of personal spiritual evolution must occur if there is to be any likelihood of this happening.

Even with personal evolution it may not be impossible, as attested by the Spirit of the Earth which is forever tied to the earth. This may also be part of man's fate. As the Spirit of the Earth says:

> If thou could see thy soul left desolate,
> Circling through cold, immeasurable space,
> Seeking in vain for meaning and for form
> Which might express it in an alien world;
> Feeling nought there, and comprehending nought,
> Thou wouldest feel the terror. Knowest thou,
> All thought, all feeling that within thee dwell,
> Are but the radiance of that self-same mass
> Of matter thou art wont to name the Earth.
> If it were else, it could no more exist,
> And thou couldst, with the Earth, exist no more.
> Thy fair and foul, thy heaven and thy hell
> Thou dost but from my spirit take to thee;
> That spirit breathing in thy little sphere.
> Ah, what is here can everlasting truth
> May be undreamt of in another world;
> The here impossible, be natural there;
> Weight not exist, life rest immovable.
> What here is air may there perchance, be thought;
> What here is growing, be a crystal there.
> ...
> God will not suffer thine approach to Him
> And thou shalt be defeated and laid low.
>
> (p. 175-6)

Indeed Adam is "laid low" but not completely defeated and he is brought back to the Earth. Madách's stress upon the humanity of man is obvious here, as well as the need for man to realize and come to terms with his humanity.

The thematic concerns of the Eskimo scene are also quite obvious. The degeneration of man had taken place on many levels: the spiritual, the material and the moral. But this does not seem to be as pessimistic a statement by Madách about the future as many scholars have suggested, at least, no more of a pessimistic statement than the previous three scenes of the future. Here we are taught that changes to the environment of man may have as well detrimental effects on many aspects

of human life. This is an environmental statement of sorts. There is no doubt a difference obvious from the very beginning of the scene that separates this from the other futuristic visions. Here the initial speech opening the scene is by Adam and describes in meticulous detail the area around him, almost to the point of excluding other matters.

> Why walk we in this endless snowy waste
> Where death doth gaze on us with hollow eyes?
> Only a seal the stillness breaks, that dives
> Beneath the water startled at our tread.
> The very herbage wearies of the strife;
> Only dwarfed bushes midst the lichens sway;
> The moon glares red behind a veil of mist
> Like to a lamp within a graveyard vault.
> Lead me away to where the palm trees grow,
> To that sweet land of fragrance and the sun,
> Where now at length the soul of man has grown.
> To reach complete awareness of its strength.
> (p. 180)

In none of the previous scenes of the future is there such an emphasis upon the actual physical environment and while the stunted growth reflects the degeneration that has taken place in man, it has not been caused by man. Man has no control over the death of the sun. It is more inevitable than the effects of the Industrial Revolution which were felt after it had occurred, more than the rise of a 'religion' of science was inevitable and more than the fact that after man had gotten tired of the earth he would seek to explore space was inevitable, more so, because it is a natural, therefore absolutely causal event, whereas social evolution is man-made. The theme is one of survival, a survival with one's humanity intact. There is an unwillingness to give up even though faced with something that is inevitable, that is admirable, even if the inevitable is the fate decreed by God. This is a warning not to degenerate despite the circumstances surrounding us, which will most

surely worsen.

Thus the themes all revolve around universal, profound questions about the nature of humanity. These are generally presented in the form of an implicit warning by Madách. From the dangers of letting the materialistic be the prime aspect of human life to the danger of allowing only the rational, but intolerant world of science to rule our lives, from the need to realize our physical limitations to the need to realize as inevitable the decay and eventual death of our planet, a living organism, Madách points the way, with almost a prophetic eye, from the events of recent history towards the future.

In these scenes there is also a widespread use of symbols and images. In the London scene things take on double meanings. For example, the violets sold by the young girl are both messengers of spring and flowers for the grave of a dead child, the pearl of the jeweller is beautiful, but also represents the danger to which the diver was exposed in obtaining it, and music which at best is an inspired endeavour, has become a "torment" (p. 132) to the musician because of what it has become in this society, a degraded mere form of entertainment. This double meaning is shown in physical ways as well. The jewels around Eve's neck turn into snakes, reptiles associated with ugliness, evil and Lucifer, and the intermingling of birth and death in the <u>danse macabre</u> at the climax of the scene where the Chorus states: "Crib and coffin are but one;"(p. 150) and that "today the one who dies,/Shall to-morrow new arise!"(p. 150). The bell that tolls their death is also a sort of 'wake-up call.'

The Phalanstery scene also has the animals, plants and implements

of the museum symbolizing the years long ago, but also the great loss which the people here must do without, having placed so high an importance only on science. The horse, for example, also expounds upon the master and servant/slave relationship showing implicitly that man has simply exchanged one master for another and is just as much of a servant, or animal as the horse. It was money in London that was master and here it is science. Ironically, and perhaps a little pathetically, man does not even know how much of a slave he really is in the Phalanstery.

The space scene, because it deals with things of such a philosophical nature, is not as rich in symbolic imagery as the other scenes, but nevertheless symbols are present. There is the image of the Earth, a special planet, as indistinguishable from other stars at a great distance. This reflects in a larger sense the nature of man, each unique but yet each the same. But the most important image here is that of flying. It symbolizes initially freedom and power and comes to show most explicitly the limitations of man when Adam loses consciousness.

The Eskimo scene also uses symbols to reflect the inner nature of man. The physical environment shows the physical and spiritual degeneration and regression of man. The seal has become the important commodity here. It is a means of life, providing food, but also, it is a means of death, for if you possess it and your neighbour does not, you may be killed for it, as the Eskimo killed his neighbour.

These dystopian visions are clearly warnings from Madách as to what might possibly happen in the future. Strangely they have, over the course of the last one hundred years or so, become almost prophetic, for

they do indeed foretell much of what has developed since Madách's own time. They are an attempt to create an awareness of the dangers that were already evident in mid-nineteenth century Europe and show the directions in which they were developing. They reveal the broad scope of Madách's imagination as well as the depth of his thought when considering these questions. They also reveal the long-sightedness of Madách's concept of human history and life. They show the concerns which he believed to be the most important and disclose the questions of the utmost importance to all of us as human beings. These scenes of the future question things that many would rather not have questioned, such as the supremacy of logic, because these questions make them uncomfortable. These dystopian visions, also by showing problems help point us in the right direction in trying to arrive at their solutions, if they have any. They are not indications of the pessimism of Madách, but rather demonstrate the profound understanding of this writer of where life was moving and his ability to share these thoughts with others.

Notes

[1] A Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), ed. R. W. Burchfield, Vol. I, p. 894.

[2] Priscilla Robertson, Revolutions of 1848: A Social History (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1952), Chapter XIII, "The Modernisation of Hungary," p. 259-285.

[3] Ibid., p. 259, 265.

[4] From a conversation with Professor Károly Horváth in Budapest of September, 1984, in which he stated that Madách desired to write an article on phrenology because of his interest and belief in it and in the parasciences in general, while realizing that to use any of the parasciences as 'the key that will open all locks' would be a grave error.

Chapter 4

INFLUENCES AND AFFINITIES

Imre Madách's dystopian visions of the future are philosophically so broad and universal, thematically so ecclectic and varied and encompass such a wide spectrum of human existence and concerns, mainly because of his own vast and varied ecclectic intellectual interests and pursuits, that two things become immediately obvious. The first obvious thing is the vast scope of international literary influences which were drawn upon and played a role in the shaping of Madách's own visions. He owes much to many thinkers, both literary and philosophical, before him. Secondly, and perhaps more strikingly, are the affinities of these dystopian visions to later works, primarily of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which compose the main strongholds of the relatively modern genre of science fiction and for which Madách's visions are antecedents, but have rarely been regarded as such. To consider these visions as belonging to the foundations of modern science fiction is a position that has only begun to be examined recently.

There are three major European literary writers that clearly influenced Madách in his writing of The Tragedy of Man, and they are Goethe and his Faust (1790-1831), Byron and his Manfred (1817) and, to a lesser extent, Cain (1821), and Victor Hugo's La Légende des Siècles (1859). The influences of these works on Madách's work have all been widely and competently examined by various scholars. These works of the

European Romantic period all concern themselves with large, cosmological themes and deal with universal and timeless problems and aspects of human existence and experience in all of its magnificence as well as all of its infamy.

After its publication and for a long time afterwards, the Tragedy was accused by many critics to be merely a poor imitation of Goethe's Faust. However, upon closer examination, many critics withdrew such unjustified criticism. In modern times the main defender of Madách's work as an individual and truly unique work, and not merely an imitation, has been Dieter Lotze. In his book Imre Madách, Chapter 5, "The Hungarian Faust? Madách and the Faust Tradition" he places The Tragedy of Man into a balanced perspective.[1]

One of the main differences, and a difference that is fundamental, is that while both Faust and the Tragedy deal with questions of a universal nature, Adam, the individual and his fate are used to show the tragedy of all mankind, as evidenced in the use of the chronological historical perspective, the title and the wide spectrum of human experience in which he takes a part, but Faust, also an individual, does not represent all of mankind in the same manner. The story told here is mainly the tragedy of a great single man as opposed to the tragedy of the whole of mankind.

There is also the concept of free will. Faust decides, freely, to enter into the accord with Mephistopheles, although it is true that Faust was unsatisfied, feeling limited in his daily life and desired to learn the meaning of existence. In other words, Faust was 'ripe' for Mephistopheles' proposal. Adam and the future of the world, as revealed

to him by Lucifer, are not as undetermined. Lucifer wants to destroy man and thereby hurt the Lord for his fall from grace. The scenes presented to Adam, and in which he plays various roles, are presented by Lucifer in the most negative of perspectives and in truth, what else can be expected from Lucifer.

While both Adam and Faust contemplate suicide, their reasons for doing so are different. Faust, at the beginning of the play, is all too aware of the limitations and the futility of his ever finding the answers he is seeking. His suicide would be meaningless. For Adam, the contemplation of suicide is brought on by the revelation of the limitations upon and probable futility of mankind through the visions of the future and the eventual end of humanity that he has been forced to see. The act of suicide would be a symbolic and meaningful act with great implications as he is the first man and his death would mean the end of human history even before it truly began. It is with Eve's announcement that she is pregnant which makes the act of suicide become meaningless, for even if Adam were to take his own life, the human race would continue.

Still there are also many similarities and parallels with Faust: for example the characterizations of Lucifer and Mephistopheles are similar, but as Lotze points out Lucifer does not possess Mephistopheles' "'devil's' redeeming sense of humour.",[2] but both are assigned a role that will keep man from being inactive and self-satisfied.

Also strikingly similar is the conjuring of the Spirits of the Earth in both plays. It is however, Lucifer who invokes the Spirit like

Faust, and not Adam. The Spirit is a means of further examination of the philosophical aspects of both plays, and both Faust and Lucifer realize that they have no control over the spiritual world. Madách clearly used Goethe's earlier creation in his portrayal of the Earth Spirit.

The role of women here is, however, quite different. While similarities exist such as Adam's and Faust's ravings of Eve's and Gretchen's beauty and their resultant desire to adorn these women with jewels, these are quite superficial. The murder of Gretchen's brother and her killing of her own child evoke pity because of the set of individual circumstances in which she finds herself. Eve is one woman and many women at the same time. Her plight evokes pity but not because it is an individual one, but a composite one.

The label of the 'Hungarian Faust' has been applied to The Tragedy of Man and has remained with it to a large extent. While there are clear similarities between the two works, Madách did not merely copy or imitate Faust, but created a unique work:

> The Hungarian playwright made no attempt, however, to disguise those parallels, as he was aware of having created a work whose structure and intention are quite different from the German tragedy.[3]

A comparable combination of similarities and differences is evident between the Tragedy and Byron's Manfred and Cain. Manfred and Cain are both solitary Faustian protagonists and are both surrounded by people who while sympathetic are incapable of completely understanding their problems. Adam, when he comes to understand the fate of mankind contemplates suicide. While Cain places more emphasis on the absolute nature of the rebellion, Manfred focuses upon the individual tragedy by

creating an atmosphere of total isolation and despair. There are similarities with the Tragedy, too.

Adam's only possible act of rebelling against his fate is suicide and his contemplation of this act is done in an atmosphere of absolute despair and isolation. Manfred summons spirits from other realms and they provide him with counsel much as the Spirit of the Earth does for Adam. Manfred, like Adam, contemplates suicide but is prevented from leaping off a cliff, not by Eve, the salvific figure, with the news of the pregnancy that changes everything, but by a hunter who fears that Manfred may be mad, a character who is incapable of radically altering the movement of the play.

Cain also travels through the air with Lucifer who provides visions of other times, but unlike Adam, at the end of his journey he states that he had learned nothing from the visions. There can be no doubt of Adam having learned much, perhaps even much more than he may have wanted to know, from Lucifer's visions. In neither of Byron's plays is there a figure comparable to the Eve of the Tragedy, who represents woman incarnate with all of her perfections and flaws, even though Eve, the mother of Cain, does appear in Cain. Also the Lord does not appear in either Cain or Manfred to offer words of encouragement and provide the necessary power to the forces of optimism and hope as he does in The Tragedy of Man. The optimism, hope and the need to persevere and strive are fundamental premises of Madách's concept of creation and the fate of man on earth.

The form of the Tragedy links it most closely to the larger European tradition of the poème d'humanité, the prime example of which

was Victor Hugo's La Légende des Siècles. This poem of humanity and its historical progress describes, as does The Tragedy of Man, the development of mankind from the paradisal state to a state far in the future. In Chapter 5 of Lotze's Imre Madách there is a separate section entitled "II Hugo and Madách: Two Romanticists Look at Human History" in which he examines in detail the specific parallels between the two works, such as the direct similarities of the subject matter of each era of their respective fifteen scenes, the presence of Hugo's favourite themes in the Tragedy, the use of a 'protector-protégé' relationship in both of the works, as well as the philosophical similarities that include the viewpoint that institutionalized religion is less than a positive force in society.[4]

Lotze also points out that there are at the same time differences between the two works which are vital, like the difference in the structure of the works of the same genre with Madách's unique use of a central hero who serves to unify the work is unique. He emphasizes historical figures, while Hugo focuses on average people and groups of people. The result of this is that Hugo's work is not as unified, comprehensive or complete as the Tragedy. Another main difference is that La Légende des Siècles makes reference to the French experience, while Madách consciously avoids any reference to the Hungarian presence, with the exception of a passing illusion to Hunyadi, who managed to stop the Turkish invasion of the Holy Roman Empire, as the "Champion of the Cross" (p. 184-5). But Lotze maintains, and rightly so, that these two works are the "clearest and most outstanding examples of the Romantic poème d'humanité."[5]

There are also a number of philosophical influences on The Tragedy of Man. One of the most obvious of these is the impact of the works of Charles Marie François Fourier, the French social reformer and utopian thinker who proposed a utopian world that was based on a voluntary association of producers in units or phalanxes. His work predicted such twentieth-century concepts as social insurance, classification of jobs, problems of industrial fatigue, problems of stress and 'burn-out' and the resulting mental health concerns which have become common aspects of contemporary everyday life. Approximately four hundred families of four persons each would live in a phalanstère or common building. There would be a division of and specialization in labour with members changing their jobs frequently to insure maximum efficiency. Education, health services and other 'social' and tertiary services were provided by the phalanx to all of its members.

This thinking encouraged the rise of co-operativism, an awareness of social welfare concerns and issues, attempts at 'utopian' experiments in city and regional planning, as well as trade unionism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There can be no doubt that many aspects of this thinking are present in Madách's work, from the use of the Phalanstery to its foundations which are stated when Adam asks:

ADAM Then tell me which ideal doest thou set
To breathe into this people unity,
And with a common purpose fire its heart?

THE SCIENTIST That all should have enough to live on; this,
This is the ideal that linketh us.
(p. 161)

The prime purpose here is the maintenance of human life at a level where all are able to live, as is the prime aim of social reformers in our world today.

As the bell is rung, the Scientist expounds on the rigid schedule of life within the Phalanstery:

> LUCIFER What meaneth this?
> THE
> SCIENTIST Work ceases, and the hour for leisure strikes.
> Here come they from the workshops and fields.
> Now he who hath done ill meets punishment,
> Now women and the children are assigned.
> Let us go there. I, too, am needed there.
> (p.165)

The motivation here has exactly the same basis as that of Fourier's writings, the need for social reform. While the Phalanstery is based upon principles that regard science to be of the prime importance, the system created by the worship of science is an all-encompassing social one. Relaxation, work, productivity, food supplies, justice and maintenance of the race are all insured in the rigidly-set daily schedule. The social order is very different from what was acceptable in mid-nineteenth-century Europe, in its process of mate selection, its economic system, its concept of the purpose and actual form of the family unit, its concept of the purpose of life, its method of education, its assignment of jobs and lifestyles to people, its educational system and its view of the role of the individual. Madách's view of a reformed society with its basis in scientific principles was just as radical and revolutionary in its time as were the writings of Fourier, upon which much of it is based.

The French Enlightenment of Voltaire with its skepticism, its hatred of corruption and superstition and its inability to hold true any longer the old world in which industrialization, reason and science had not been the dominant forces was also an influence on Madách's visions of the future. Just as Voltaire's world was on the verge of a new era,

so too Madách's world was moving from the Romantic period to the Realistic period that was to reach its apex in the twentieth century. This was the dawn of the modern, new world. The Age of Reason with its strict emphasis on logical thinking and rationalism is manifested in both the character of the Scientist and the Aged Man of the Phalanstery, the rationalism of whom is so absolute that it does not contain any traces of human feeling, emotion or sensitivity, as is seen in the passage in which the children are taken away from their mothers, and their complete insensitivity to the feelings of others when they assign a life's profession to a person based upon the bumps and lumps found on their heads, condemning them to a lifetime which may be a spiritual wasteland (viz. Cassius, Plato and Michelangelo).

There are also parts of Voltaire's Essai sur les Moeurs in the Tragedy. Here Voltaire maintained that the history of culture was the unifying factor in considering mankind's total history in Europe.

> Battles and revolutions are the smallest part of the plan; ... Take away the arts and the progress of the mind, and you will find nothing ... remarkable enough to attract the attention of posterity.[6]

This is directly linked to the use of historical scenes by Madách wherein each Adam learns something philosophical and spiritual about man's and mankind's fate on earth, for example, the dangers and disunifying results of commercialization and industrialization in the London scene. The 'education' of Adam in the fifteen scenes shows a development of his and the audience's mind and frame of reference that is definitely worthy "enough to attract the attention of posterity."

Also present in The Tragedy of Man are traces of Rousseau's philosophical thinking with its elements of naivete and its

sentimentality for the brotherhood of man. Lucifer is amazed, amused and occasionally even angered by the credulity of Adam as he is shown visions of mankind's future. This innocence is understandable and believable as Adam is the first man. By showing him a future full of corruption, Lucifer corrupts Adam and rids him of his artlessness and sentimentality as part of his plan to drive Adam to suicide.

ADAM O dreadful visions, whither are ye fled?
Around me all things live and smile as when
I left them. Broken is my heart alone!
LUCIFER Vain mortal. Wouldst thou then that Nature's rule
Should fall assunder, that athwart the sky
A comet new should glare, or earth should quake
Because a worm doth perish in the dust?
(p. 188)

To Lucifer a man is merely a worm and not the 'noble creature' that Rousseau and Madách believed and knew him to be.

The Scientist and the Aged Man show Madách's familiarity with Kant's Critique of Pure Reason which shows the limitations of reason. A priori knowledge or non-empirical experience is not taken into account by the scientific, rationalistic method and thus such knowledge always remains incomplete. This reinforced Madách's skepticism that science could provide all of the answers to man's problems.

> My question is, what can we hope to achieve with reason, when all the material and assistance of experience are taken away.[7]

While the Scientist maintains that:

... 'Tis a law, for so things are.
Experience doth teach us of its truth.
(p. 163)

The only experience that matters here is that of reason and science. Philosophy and art have been irradicated and are considered "dreaming phantasies," (p. 167) and a "breach of the rules" (p. 168) as seen in

the punishments of Plato and Michelangelo.

As seen earlier, the impact of Herder's Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit (1784-1791) had a deep impact on the Hungarian literary scene of the first half of the nineteenth century, which in turn shaped Madách's literary style. Other aspects of Herder's writings also may be found in the Tragedy. Herder's notion that God at every instant brings forth the world in its endless variety and expresses himself in it without exhausting his essence in only one space of history is present here.

The visions of the future, as negative and as dystopian as they are, all still contain the Lord who is manifested in Adam's questioning and his dogged refusal to believe completely and absolutely the visions with which Lucifer presents him. He remains optimistic of the future. In the midst of the London scene with its industrialization, world of commerce, and the subsequent disunity of mankind, he maintains

> Instead, such a society, I would
> As should protect, not punish; courage give,
> Not threaten, boldly work with common force;
> Such as the mind of science should conceive,
> Where, o'er its order, Reason should stand guard.
> And it shall come, my heart doth know full well.
> (p. 149)

And after his disillusionment with the Phalanstery Adam optimistically states:

> The voice of spirits 'tis that on us lights
> From purer worlds in song ineffable,
> A witness that our souls to them are kin,
> And we despise the dust of this vile earth
> And seek a path to a higher world than this.
> (p. 172)

Similarly Adam's optimism remains steadfast at the end of the scene in space, when he maintains that:

> ... ----- it too will pass,
> As all things that their office have fulfilled,
> And then the thought creative shall once more
> Breathe into it the flaming breath of life.
> (p. 179)

There is only the admission that there is a possibility of defying God which is evidenced in the giving in to despair, the being without hope, at the end of the Eskimo scene. There is no absolute eradication of his optimism forever. His hope is gone only for an instant, the instant at which he decides to jump, but with the realization of Eve's condition this is gone, too. In the end he questions God with queries that are constructed to contain both negative and positive elements. He is surely distressed and upset by what he has seen, but there are traces of the old optimism, when he admits that he is not sure of the degree of truth of his dream visions.

> My Lord, dread visions have tormented me.
> I know not what of truth within them lie.
> (p. 192)

This presence of hope even in the dystopian visions reveals the non-absolute nature of the dystopia form. While the anti-utopia is clearly the opposite to the utopian world, the dystopia has the possibility of containing various degrees of anti-utopianism. Lawlor articulates this position:

> Although 'dystopia' and 'antiutopia' are used synonymously, they are different. Clearly the opposite of utopia, in the antiutopia there is a social disorder, repression, and the like. The dystopia is less absolute. Wells' vision of a future world inhabited by Eloi and Morlocks is a case in point. That world is a decayed utopia. On the other hand, the social order may malfunction or become dysfunctional, as in Heinlein's Stranger in a Strange Land or Vonnegut's Player Piano, without ever acheiving a utopian state.[8]

Madách's visions are less than absolute. They are true dystopian visions in which the utopian ideal has never been reached, merely the

intention to reach a utopian state can be found in them.

The influence of Plato's Republic and some of its methods of education, such as having children taken away from their families to be educated and using selective breeding to produce certain kinds of children,[9] are seen in the state of youth in the Phalanstery (see Chapter 3), wherein youth is merely a participant in life and not the dominant and active decision-maker or planner of his life. This eventually produces adult individuals who work amidst whirling machinery without question. Similarly the Hegelian notion of a Christian God, but not necessarily the God of institutionalized Christianity is manifested in the characterization of the Lord. There is also Hegel's concept of the phenomenology of the mind seeking to attain absolute knowledge in the 'education' of Adam. The gaining of knowledge is what is of paramount importance to Adam in the fifteen scenes of The Tragedy of Man. When facing the Lord, Adam asks to become a party to absolute knowledge.

> O lift the veil, and I with thankfulness
> Will bear whatever destiny is mine.
> Nought can I lose by knowledge, for the doubt
> That doth torment my soul is nether hell.
> (p. 193)

The absolute certainty of the future of mankind is a precondition and a part of the absolute knowledge for which Adam strives, but is unable to attain because it is not man's place to know such things. The Lord tells him:

> Seek not to pierce the veil the hand of God
> In mercy draws across thy longing eyes.
> (p. 193)

There are also a number of works of the science fiction genre for which the dystopian visions of the future in The Tragedy of Man are, if

not actual and literal antecedents, then definitely antecedents in tone and atmosphere. The first of these is Jules Verne's Les 500 millions de la Bégoume (The Begum's Fortune) in which a 'seemingly' perfect industrial state is depicted, but is revealed to be a society that is much less than perfect. It shows technology to be terrible, because it fosters inhumane feelings in people and echoes Adam's sentiment that the world of technology is "monotonous and dreary" (p. 169), and "great things and noble folly" (p. 172).

When the hero, Max Bruckmann, returns from his sojourn in the supposed utopia of Stahlstadt, he tells Dr. Sarrasin, his future father-in-law of what he found there and of the death of Herr Schultz, the technological 'utopian' society's founder who had developed imperialistic tendencies.

> Then he [Max] added -----
>
> "The greatest proof of the death of Herr Schultz, even if we had not seen him, is that everything around him has ceased to live. There is nothing breathing in Stahlstadt. As in the palace of the Sleeping Beauty, slumber has suspended all life, and arrested every movement. The effects of the master's death has extended, not only to the servants, but also to the machinery."
>
> "Yes," returned Dr. Sarrasin, "we see in this the justice of God! From indulging in his hatred against us, and urging on his attack with such boundless rancour Herr Schultz has perished."[10]

The technology that formed the basis of Stahlstadt and the Phalanstery, as well as the industrial technology of the London scene, were all doomed to failure because of their narrowly restricted and limited frame-of-reference. The limitation of the vision upon which a possible society is based only serves to guarantee its end. The hopes for these societies were so great initially, but the results have been

so terrible that Max and Adam are forced to flee.

But Verne has taken this notion further. He has coupled this narrowness of vision with an imperialistic tendency. Herr Schultz uses Stahlstadt to create his masterpiece, a gigantic cannon and carbonic acid bombs which he employs in his attempt to destroy Frankville. The desire for power added to his limited perspective insure his death as seen in the final letter he was writing when he died.

> ... As soon as this order is received execute the measures I have devised; they must this time be over-whelming and complete. Do not alter an iota of what I have decided upon. I wish that in a fortnight Frankville should become a city of the dead without a surviving inhabitant. I hope for a modern Pompeii, to be at once a terror and an astonishment to the whole world. If my orders are properly executed, this result will be inevitable.[11]

Herr Schultz' extreme position does not allow for any changes or variations upon his aims and plans. He alone makes the decisions and brooks no argument or question. In effect he has made himself a vengeful god of Stahlstadt who wants to instill terror into others. This reign based upon such autocratic and self-serving values is doomed. It is doomed not only because of its narrow vision but also because its restricted vision is one of authoritarianism, terror and self-interest. This is an extreme variation of the Phalanstery where reason and science are the limits of vision and everything else must be subjugated to fall within their boundaries. The limits of vision become the only things of importance and therefore are condemned to failure through the "justice of God."

An affinity between the Tragedy and H. G. Wells' The Time Machine (1928) also exists. The sense of the frozen wasteland presented by Madách in the Eskimo scene is filled with an atmosphere of extreme

desolation and sterility and its features are present in The Time Machine when the Time Traveller travels far into the future and witnesses the dying stages of the earth.

> I cannot convey the sense of abominable desolation that hung over the world. The red eastern sky, the northward blackness, the salt Dead Sea, the stony beach crawling with these foul, slow-stirring monsters, the uniform poisonous-looking green of the lichenous plants, the thin air that hurts one's lungs; all contributed to an appalling effect. I moved on a hundred years, and there was the same red sun--a little larger, a little duller--the same dying sea, the same chill air, and the same crowd of earthy crustacea creeping in and out among the green weed and the red rocks. And in the westward sky I saw a curved pale line like a vast new moon.
>
> So I travelled, stopping ever and again, in great strides of a thousand years or more, drawn on by the mystery of the earth's fate, watching with a strange fascination the sun grow larger and duller in the westward sky, and the life of the old earth ebb away. At last, more than thirty million years hence, the huge red-hot dome of the sun had come to obscure nearly a tenth part of the darkling heavens. Then I stopped once more, for the crawling multitude of crabs had disappeared, and the red beach, save for its livid green liverworts and lichens seemed lifeless. And now it was flecked with white. A bitter cold assailed me. Rare white flakes ever and again came eddying down. To the northeastward, the glare of snow lay under the starlight of the sable sky, and I could see an undulating crest of hillocks pinkish white. There were fringes of ice along the sea margin, with drifting masses further out; but the main expanse of that salt ocean, all bloody under the eternal sunset, was still unfrozen.
>
> I looked about me to see if any traces of animal life remained. A certain indefinable apprehension still kept me in the saddle of the machine. But I saw nothing moving, in earth or sky or sea. The green slime on the rocks along testified that life was not extinct. ... The stars in the sky were intensely bright and seemed to me to twinkle very little.
>
> Suddenly I noticed that the circular westward outline of the sun had changed; that a concavity, a bay, had appeared in the curve. I saw this grow larger. For a minute perhaps I stared aghast at this blackness that was creeping over the day, and then I realized that an eclipse was beginning. Either the moon or the planet Mercury was passing across the sun's disk. Naturally, at first I took it to be the moon, but there is much to incline me to believe that what I really saw was the transit of an inner planet passing very near to the earth.
>
> The darkness grew apace; a cold wind began to blow in freshening gusts from the east, and the showering flakes in the air increased in number. From the edge of the sea came a ripple and whisper. Beyond these lifeless sounds the world was silent.

> Silent? It would be hard to convey the stillness of it. All the sounds of man, the bleating of sheep, the cries of birds, the hum of insects, the stir that makes the background of our lives--all that was over. As the darkness thickened, the eddying flakes grew more abundant, dancing before my eyes; and the cold of the air more intense. At last, one by one, swiftly, one after the other, the white peaks of the distant hills vanished into blackness. The breeze rose to a moaning wind. I saw the black central shadow of the eclipse sweeping towards me. In another moment the pale stars alone were visible. All else was rayless obscurity. The sky was absolutely black.
>
> A horror of this great darkness came on me. The cold, that smote to my marrow, and the pain I felt in breathing, overcame me. I shivered, and a deadly nausea seized me. Then like a red-hot bow in the sky appeared the edge of the sun. I got off the machine to recover myself. I felt giddy and incapable of facing the return journey ... I stood sick and confused ... Then I felt I was fainting. But a dread of lying helpless in that remote and awful twilight sustained me while I clambered upon the saddle.[12]

This is foreshadowed by Adam's observations of the Eskimo setting:

> ... this endless snowy waste,
> Where death doth gaze on us with hollow eyes?
> ...
> The very herbage wearies of the strife;
> Only dwarfed bushes midst the lichen sway;
> The moon glares red behind a veil of mist
> Like to a lamp within a graveyard vault.
> ...
> O dreadful world--to die were good alone!
> ...
> Now, as upon this giant sepulchre.
> Whereon her mourning pall hath Nature cast,
> I muse on Earth, the first and last on man:
> (p. 180-1)

In both works there is a unique sense that there are certain inescapable and inevitable biological-ecological processes of the universe of which man is only a part and which he is unable to control, influence or alter. Although Wells predicts more scientifically the time at which the earth will be in its dying stages than does Madách, the interest of examining the fate of man when faced with such natural processes is the same for both writers, despite their being more than fifty years apart. Wells' work shows a more technical awareness of the scientific process

which reflects the advances in knowledge about the earth's biological and ecological systems that had been achieved by the early twentieth century as opposed to Madách's slightly more naive yet nevertheless insightful examination.

Yevgeny Zamyatin's We (written in 1920, published in 1924-5) also has affinities with Madách's visions of the future. The protagonist, I-330, lives in a glass environment where, just as in the Phalanstery forms of animal life are considered 'unnatural.' Another character, D-503, sums up this society's regard for the natural world.

> But fortunately between me and the wild green ocean was the glass of the Wall. Oh, great, divinely bounding wisdom of Walls and barriers! They are perhaps, the greatest of man's inventions. Man ceased to be a wild animal only when he built the first wall. Man ceased to be a savage only when he had built the Green Wall, when he had isolated our perfect mechanical world from the irrational, hideous world of trees, birds, animals, ...[13]

The considering of the natural world as unnatural is merely the position of the Scientist of the Phalanstery carried even further. The animals of the earth, with the exception of "useful beasts" (p. 157), are mounted in a museum and have become subjects of tales and legends of superstition. This superstition has developed and crystallized into fear and abhorrence in the world created by Zamyatin. One world constructs a museum to keep stuffed examples of these 'non-useful' animals in, the other world constructs a glass wall to keep such "irrational, hideous" things out.

Also similar in these two works is the control of mating. In the world of I-330 lovemaking is scheduled in certain hours and on certain days in accordance with a program designed individually for each person. Decisions concerning mate selection and mating are made by an outside

person of authority and simply made known to the people actually involved in the Glass Environment and the Phalanstery. Violent, irrational passion is considered totally foreign and absolutely intolerable. In the Phalanstery such passion is not allowed and in We, the Benefactor's men destroy any such existing passion when they get rid of man's imagination and soul in the usual lobotomies that non-conformists are forced to undergo.

Aldous Huxley's Brave New World (1932) also has affinities with Madách's Tragedy. The use of science as an invader of human life is examined in both works. In Madách's case the parascience of phrenology has become a part of every aspect of human life, from mate selection and breeding to education and choice of lifestyles. Huxley carries this idea further. Genetic engineering replaces phrenology as the basis of society, determining the parameters of human life with the creation of Alphas, Betas, Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons to fulfil various occupations within the social structure that require specific intelligence levels. While Madách concentrated on the moral implications of such an action, as seen in the denegration and humiliation of artistic and spiritual people such as the new Plato and the new Michelangelo, Huxley, by the twentieth century has assumed the scientific technology and terminology that is more specific, perhaps not philosophically but definitely more specific technically.

The revelation that societies so dominated by one or another single aspect are dangerous to man, despite his having created them, remains the same. There is a 'price to pay' for the dominance of society by one principle and is seen in Mustapha Mond's comments.

> We don't want to change. Every change is a menace to stability. That's another reason why we're so chary of applying new inventions. Every discovery in pure science is potentially subversive; even science must sometimes be treated as a possible enemy. Yes, even science. ... It's curious, ... to read what people in the time of Our Ford used to write about scientific progress. They seemed to have imagined that it could be allowed to go on indefinitely, regardless of everything else. ... Our Ford himself did a great deal to shift the emphasis from truth and beauty to comfort and happiness. Mass production demanded the shift. Universal happiness keeps the wheels steadily turning; truth and beauty can't. ... What's the point of truth or beauty or knowledge when the anthrax bombs are popping all around you? That was when science first began to be controlled-- ... People were ready to have even their appetites controlled then. Anything for a quiet life. We've gone on controlling ever since. It hasn't been very good for truth, of course. But it's been very good for happiness. One can't have something for nothing. Happiness has got to be paid for.
> ... The gods are just. No doubt. But their code of law is dictated, in the last resort, by the people who organize society; Providence takes its cue from men.[14]

Huxley has taken the dominance of science to its extreme. He is not content with it merely being dominant, but shows science itself, restricted by the society which it has created. The cause the "shall knit together all the world" (p. 153), science and reason, which Adam tries to understand has been effectively 'tied-up' in the Brave New World of Huxley. In the phalanstery Madách does not show science shackled. Adam states what man has had to give up to reach this state,

> Thus, there is then no life, no striving soul
> That doth in art the craftsman's skill surpass.
> Where then doth mind and force find field and scope
> To prove their source in heaven's glowing light?
> If man would fight and gaze upon this world
> Of ordered system, regularity,
> He findeth not the joy that peril rings,
> No savage beast yet lives to challenge him.
> In Science I am disenchanted, to!
> I see a school for children dull and grey,
> In place of happiness I claimed from it.
> (p. 161)

but reason and science are not yet controlled because the society has not yet reached the level of sophistication at which Huxley's dystopia

is situated. The foundations of this are, however, already present in Madách's work.

The attempt to control the thoughts of the new Plato, Cassius and Michelangelo has been expounded upon in George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four (1949) with its creation of the Thought Police and Thoughtcrime. Winston Smith, the hero, in his diary repeatedly writes "DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER", the ruler of society, and,

> He could not help feeling a twinge of panic. It was absurd, since the writing of these particular words was not more dangerous than the initial act of opening the diary; but for a moment he was tempted to tear out the spoiled pages and abandon the enterprise altogether.
>
> But he did not do so, however, because he knew that it was useless. Whether he wrote DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER, or whether he refrained from writing it, made no difference. Whether he went on with the diary or whether he did not go on with it, made no difference. The Thought Police would get him just the same. He had committed--would still have committed, even if he had never set pen to paper--the essential crime that contained all others in itself. Thoughtcrime, they called it. Thoughtcrime was not a thing that could be concealed forever. You might dodge successfully for a while, even for years, but sooner or later they were bound to get you.
>
> ...
>
> Thoughtcrime does not entail death: thoughtcrime is death.[15]

Orwell states explicitly what Madách implies, that the restriction of human thought means death, spiritual and perhaps physical, for once spiritual death has occurred, physical death cannot be far behind. Adam's reactions to the punishments given to Cassius, Plato and Michelangelo may not be as straight-forward as saying "thoughtcrime is death" but the import, insight and impact are the same.

> Ah, Cassius, ...
> ... Is the world
> So changed to ill, and learning grown so blind
> That such a noble heart is held as nought
> And deemed a hindrance to the common weal?
> ...
> Ah Plato, what a part is given thee
> In that same world for which thou once didst long.

...
O Michelangelo, within that hell
Thy soul must be, that thou canst not create!
How many that I knew, I see at hand,
How many spirits, mighty ones of old!
With him I fought--he died a martyr's death;
This one, earth's turning globe too narrow found.
And now, how uniform and dwarfed the State
Has made the Earth... Ah, Lucifer, away!
No longer can my soul this sight endure.
(p. 167-8)

The invasion, degeneration and disentegration of human thought also implies the demise of human dignity and attacks the very essence of what makes us human.

Besides serving as antecedents to such international works, the dystopian visions of the future in The Tragedy of Man serve to mark one of the first works to be even remotely considered to belong to the science fiction genre. Before Madách no Hungarian works contained such elements, but afterward, two types of science fiction began to appear. The most prominent of these was Mór Jókai's A jövő század regénye (Novel of the Coming Century, 1872-4) which depicts a future society of the mid-twentieth century where eternal peace exists but the people eventually run out of food and are forced to become earth-eaters (humus) and everything depends on ichor, a substance that looks like glass but is unbreakable and flexible. An electrical flying machine is built and an air battle is described for the first time in literature. A comet arrives within the solar system which destroys the rings of Saturn, threatens to destroy the earth, provides the moon with its own atmosphere and establishes an orbit of its own as a planet. Jókai's work reflects the science fiction writer's dependence on a scientific technology that provides its own terminology.

Kálmán Mikszáth's Új Zrínyiász (The Second Coming of Zrínyi) published in 1898 is an example of a less-technical form of science fiction, a type of science fiction that is primarily concerned with the human impact of the future. The revered Hungarian hero, Zrínyi, who died valiently in the sixteenth century on the battlefield of Szigetvár against the Turks of the advancing Ottoman Empire, is reborn to find himself in the nineteenth-century banking world of Budapest. Although he criticizes much, he manages to become a bank director. He is able to survive not because of his heroism but through his ruthless nature, which is seen when he holds hostages in the bank vault. Ironically the world around him is corrupt and he must become so. The Minister of the Interior's only worry is not for the hostages but for the threat of possible public scandal. But Zrínyi does not have to endure this world forever, and is allowed to move with his soldiers to a remote castle in the country where he is free to live according to his own norms and also leaves the possibility that he may repeat his historical exit and die heroically once more. This shows the other stream of science fiction writing that developed in Hungary. This was more concerned with the human impact of time travel in much the same vein as Mark Twain's A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court.

There are indeed numerous literary and philosophical influences on and affinities with The Tragedy of Man. These provide the Tragedy with a worldview or Weltanschau that is so broad and universal in scope that it is insured a permanent place in world literature because it is a truly rare work in its vast richness. This invites the drawing of a multiplicity of connections between the Tragedy and other works which in

turn allows for the formulation of many interpretations of the work from different perspectives and also allows the work to serve as the starting point from which other works may originate. When a literary work can be interpreted in a variety of ways, serve as a spiritual, if not necessarily literal inspiration for other literary works, provide a Weltanschau of such breadth that it encompasses much of the critical thought of the society in which it was written, and have an individual character that is truly unique, it does belong to the truly great works of art. The dystopian visions in the Tragedy fulfill all of these requirements. They are indeed a

> ... view of the advance of biological sciences ... critique of scientific marriage planning and professional counseling.[16]

as George Bisztray describes them in his article "Man's Biological Future in Hungarian Utopian Literature," but they are so much more than just this.

Notes

[1]Dieter Lotze, Imre Madách (Boston: Twayne, 1981), p. 105-129.

[2]Dieter Lotze, "From the 'Goethe of Széphalom' to the 'Hungarian Faust': A Half Century of Goethe Reception in Hungary," Canadian-American Review of Hungarian Studies, Vol. VI, No. 1, Spring, 1979, p. 16.

[3]Ibid., p. 16.

[4]Lotze, Imre Madách, p. 137-143.

[5]Ibid., p. 143.

[6]Will Durant, The Story of Philosophy: The Lives and Opinions of the Great Philosophers of the Western World (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961), second edition, p. 169.

[7]Ibid., p. 201-2.

[8]Donald L. Lawlor, Approaches to Science Fiction (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1978), p. 423.

[9]Durant, p. 30-31.

[10]Jules Verne, The Begum's Fortune (London: Sampson Law, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1880), trans. by W. H. G. Kingston, p. 231.

[11]Ibid., p. 227-8.

[12]H. G. Wells, The Time Machine and Other Stories (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1927), Collected Essex Edition, Vol. XVI, p. 91-3.

[13]Yevgeny Zamyatin, We (New York: Avon Books, 1972), trans. by Mirra Ginsburg, p. 93.

[14]Aldous Huxley, Brave New World (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), intro. by Charles J. Rolo, p. 269, 273-4, 283.

[15]George Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four (New York: New American Library, 1961), afterword by Erich Fromm, p. 19, 27.

[16]George Bisztray, "Man's Biological Future in Hungarian Utopian Literature," Canadian-American Review of Hungarian Studies, Vol. III, No. 1, Spring, 1976, p. 5-6.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS

The examination of the dystopian visions in Madách's The Tragedy of Man reveals the influence of Hungarian writers and the Hungarian literary movement that preceded Madách in the similarity of their concerns, but it also intimates the scope of Madách's genius which advanced the concept of a national nemzethalál to a universal világhalál. He was able to tap into the rich national literary environment and tradition, and not only contribute to it, but also supercede the nationalistic limitations that existed.

The vast amount of interest and scholarship that resulted from the Tragedy internationally shows the universal nature of the work. The ecclectic character of the work as a whole and the dystopian visions of the future in particular indicate Madách's ability to incorporate much of the world around him into this creation. This process is what in his Preface to the Lyrical Ballads William Wordsworth describes thus:

> The object of the Poet's thoughts are everywhere; though the eyes and senses of man are, ... his favourite guides, yet he will follow wheresoever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings. Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge--it is as immortal as the heart of man. If the labours of Men of Science should ever create any material revolution, direct or indirect, in our conditions and in the impressions which we habitually receive, the Poet will sleep then no more than at present; he will be ready to follow the steps of the Man of Science, not only in those general indirect effects, but he will be at his side, carrying the sensation into the midst of the objects of science itself. The remotest discoveries of the Chemist, the Botanist, or Mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the Poet's art as any upon which it can be employed, if the time should ever come when these things

> shall be familiar to us, and the relations under which they are contemplated by the followers of these respective sciences shall be manifestly and palpably material to us as enjoying and suffering beings. If the time should ever come when what is now called science, thus familiarized to men, shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the Poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration, and will welcome the Being thus produced, as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man.[1]

The Tragedy shows that Madách was indeed worthy to "follow in the steps" of the great thinkers of his time. His examination of the world and his ability to include his observations in his work result in visions of the future which are remarkably prophetic. Madách examined existing trends and possibilities and discovered worlds that were to come.

Many elements of Madách's writing came from his family and his socio-economic status that allowed him unique educational opportunities and thereby enhanced this play. The family and socio-economic situation also provided Madách with a wealth of experiences to draw upon in his writing. His individual writing style and artistic concerns were affected as well by the political circumstances of Hungary in the mid-nineteenth century. His place in the upper echelons of Hungarian society insured his awareness of and sensitivity to political developments.

The depth of Madách's perception is seen in the thematic content of the visions of the future. The possible future as well as existing dangers of the Industrial Revolution which were only beginning to be felt in Hungary at the time, are seen in nineteenth-century London. Also the end of one era in man's history and the beginning of another are shown in symbolic yet clear ways. Madách's interest in the rise of science is evident in the technical aspects of the Phalanstery scene,

with its estimation of the death of the sun, its utilitarian attitudes to animal and human life and the use of phrenology as a determinant of human worth and value. The fate of man which is bound inextricably with that of the earth is dramatically depicted in the space scene. This is carried further in the Eskimo scene where Madách reveals his awareness of the biological-ecological processes of which the earth is a part and man is subject to while remaining completely unable to influence.

Relationships with other literary and philosophical works show the Tragedy to belong to Goethe's larger concept of Weltliteratur and perhaps Weltphilosophie. Similarities between Madách's work and Faust, Manfred, Cain and La Légende des Siècles place it within the larger framework of European Romanticism, but it goes beyond this movement. It can be placed at the end of one tradition and at the beginning of another, realism, whose perimeters had not yet been clearly defined.

The selective choosing of philosophical concerns from such well-known philosophers as Plato, Voltaire, Rousseau, Kant, Herder, Fourier and Hegel make clear the broad expance of Madách's humanism. His familiarity with such a variety of thinkers allows for a more comprehensive worldview or Weltanschau and this adds to the universality of the work.

The affinities of the Tragedy's dystopian visions with later works reveal it to be among the very beginnings of the science fiction genre. Madách foreshadows writers like Verne, Wells, Zamyatin, Huxley and Orwell. In some respects, his character as precursor is seen in the amount of technological simplicity found in the Tragedy. As an antecedent to the negative utopias or dystopias of the late-nineteenth

and early-twentieth centuries, Madách's work is without much of the scientific technology or terminology that has become an accepted part of science fiction, but this does not stop him from examining man's role in the future, and thus, as Mary Shelley in her preface to Frankenstein states, he

> ... affords a point of view to the imagination for the delineating of human passions more comprehensive and commanding than any which the ordinary relations of existing events can yield.[2]

Madách provides the human viewpoint about the future world, a germane issue in the contemporary science fiction genre. But his view is not quite as pessimistic as those of Wells, Zamyatin, Huxley or Orwell. Despite Adam's despair over what has been shown to him by Lucifer, the play does not end in this tone. Adam begins to feel the meaning of the song of life despite his need of reassurance from the Lord.

> I feel its meaning too: be it my guide!
> But, ah, the end; if I could that forget!
> (p. 195)

Adam's hope is further supported by the Lord's encouragement to "strive on, strive on, have faith; and trust!" (p. 195). Thus while there is a certain degree of pessimism concerning the future, based on past human history, this is somewhat counter-balanced by the words of encouragement. As well two things must be remembered: that Lucifer cannot truly present Adam with a future other than negative, as he wants to bring about man's downfall and in that way hurt the Lord for his own fall from grace and secondly that Madách could not alter what had already occurred in history and was not free to change past events of human history (i.e. those prior to his own lifetime, but belonging to Adam's future).

The dystopian visions also serve as antecedents of Hungarian forms of science fiction which generally belong to two streams: the first being a technical science fiction and the second a softer form which concentrates on the nature of the human experience in the science fiction setting as opposed to the emphasis of the first on the technological and terminological aspects. Madách, to varying degrees has both of these in his work.

The world vision and perspective in his dystopian visions of the future show Madách's work to rightfully belong to the body of Weltliteratur because of the vastness and universality of its scope. It also provides a Weltphilosophie because of the rich and varied Western traditions of religious and philosophical thought it draws upon. The dystopian visions show the possible dangers in the future whose seeds are already present. They are a form of prophetic warning, but also more importantly they are a serious attempt to create an awareness of the society in which man finds himself. This is not merely a pessimistic statement but provides encouragement and hope that the world of the future does not have to be so if we are sensitive to the probable difficulties.

The scenes showing man's history reveal that Madách is not only concerned with society, but with human nature as well. He shows how man in any historical era still possesses qualities of the first man, Adam, with his thirst for knowledge, his naivete, his curiosity and his innocence. External aspects such as civilization may change, but the deeper elements of human nature like the ability to love, the seemingly limitless capacity for hope and the capability for profound devotion and

faith, remain constant throughout time. Society as man creates it does not have encouraging results and if humanity continues the way it has been progressin, then the dystopian visions of the future may occur.

Unfortunately, what also remains constant is man's seemingly inherent 'talent' for corrupting or destroying his environment. The threat of destruction makes life so precious for Madách. The Lord explains this difficult combination of the positive and the negative.

> Thine arm is strong, and lofty is thy heart:
> A boundless field doth for thy labour call,
> And if thou listenest, a voice shall sound
> That shall not fail to warn thee and uplift.
> Heark to that voice; but if, amid the stir
> Of life the voice of heaven be not heard,
> Yet hath this woman weak a purer soul,
> And further from the taint of selfishness.
> Lo, she shall hear the melody and song be turned.
> Twin gifts hath she and shall for ever stand
> Beside thee in thy grief and happiness,
> And smile on thee and bid thee courage take.
> And thou too, Lucifer, art yet a link
> Within my universe. Work on, work on!
> Thy fond denial and thy knowledge cold
> Shall be the leaven in the mind of man,
> And though he stray a brief space from the road,
> It matters not, he shall return to it.
> But this shall be eternal punishment
> For thee, that thou shalt see unceasingly
> What thou dost seek to ruin and destroy,
> Live, the new seed of beauty, nobleness.
> (p. 194-5)

The contradictory aspect of human nature remains timeless. There is labour, selfishness, grief, ruin, destruction and eternal punishment, which Lucifer helps to bring about, but these Madách counterbalances with human happiness, courage, beauty and nobleness, and heaven's voice of warning and encouragement. For Madách, the positive and the good in life arise from the negative and the bad because both are within man's power to achieve. This is not a contradiction but an equilibrium of

opposing forces which is inherent in human nature. The beauty and nobleness of life can only be appreciated in relation to the ruin and destruction. Similarily the ruin and destruction can only be fully comprehended in comparison to the beauty of nobleness. Thus, despite Adam's depressed emotional state at the negative, horrifying things in man's future which he has witnessed, there also exists a hope for the future, something that makes it possible to "strive on, strive on, have faith; and trust!" (p.195). The insightful grasp of this innate aspect of human nature by Madách serves as an example both literally and spiritually to writers before and after him, both international and Hungarian.

Notes

[1]William Wordsworth, Preface to the Lyrical Ballads in Criticism: the Major Texts (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970), ed. by Walter Jackson Bate, p. 341-2.

[2]Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Frankenstein, or, the Modern Prometheus (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1974), ed. by James Rieger, p. 3 (preface).

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